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BUILDING & RENOVATING

Practical advice to help get your project underway

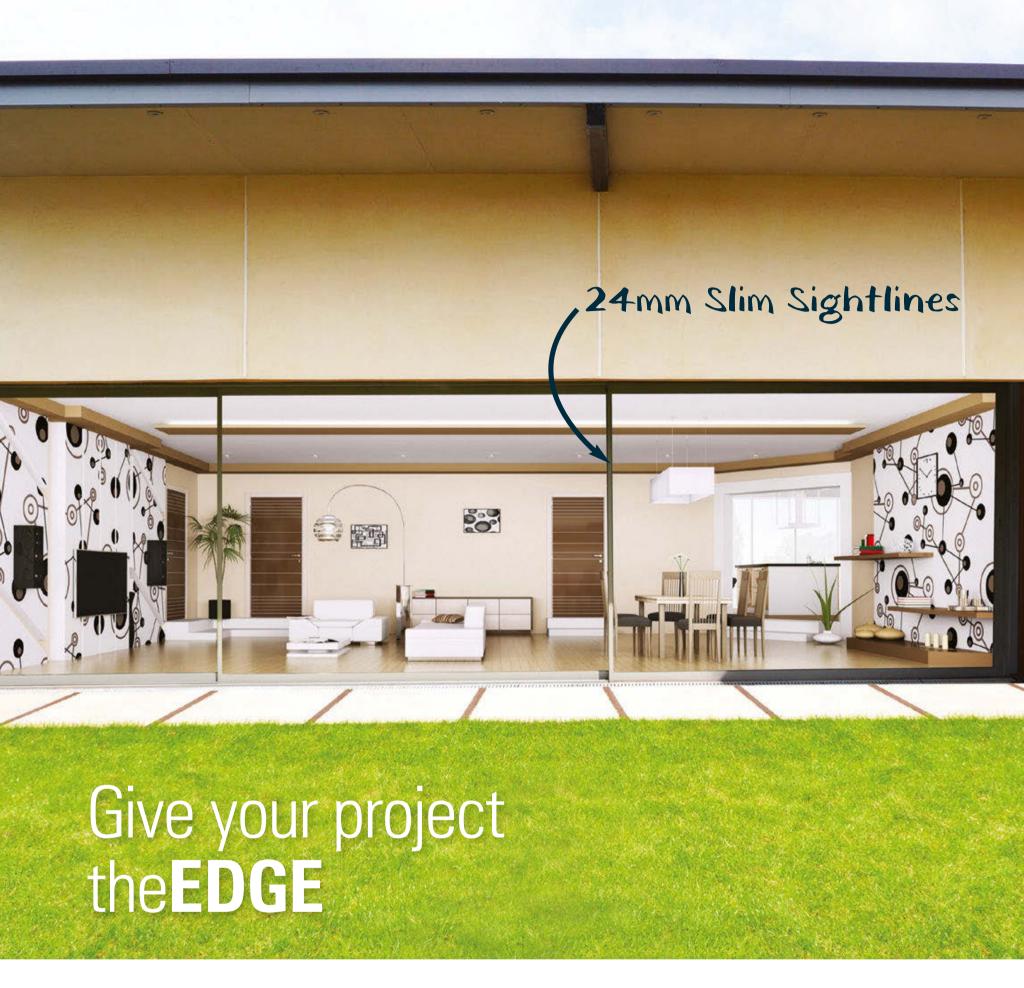
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WELCOME AUGUST 2015

AWord to the Wise

Jason Orme is the Editor of Homebuilding & Renovating

recently attended a meeting about planning housing in my local area of Burton on Trent and what struck me above all things was how poorly interpreted the recent changes to barn conversion rules have been. No doubt informed by a few soundbites from the popular press and encouraged by local word of mouth, however if you took what you heard at face value you'd be alarmed at the 'free for all' that is coming the way of rural villages.

As with most myths there is a hint of truth about it, but nowhere near as much as you might think — which is where our experts come in. We asked planning consultant Sally Tagg to take a good look at the current situation (see p.101) and how 'prior approval' has altered things. The reality is that it's not altered by a whole lot, although that now might be about to change. Building is often a case of greys



rather than black and white and, despite the hype, this is an issue that definitely sits in the complex world of 'grey'.

Elsewhere, we take a good look at the best ways to build in blockwork thanks to product innovation (p.103), detail why building estimates often go so awry (on p.119), and outline the different costs of cladding systems (p.123) — in addition to the very best home design ideas and examples of recently completed projects.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Jason Orme is currently rebuilding a 1960s house (described as 'Frank Lloyd Wrong' by HB&R's Contributing Editor Mark Brinkley) and is an experienced self-builder and renovator



AUGUST 2015

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UPFRONT

DESIGN DIGEST

The latest house design ideas and news from around the world







Luxury on the Lake

The ultimate in high-end luxury living, this architectural gem exudes contemporary flair, sitting next to Lake Geneva, Switzerland, with its powerful sculptural forms creating quite an impact.

Completed in 2010 by multi-award-winning practice SAOTA, and with the interiors completed by Antoni Associates, this 1,553m² home stands dominant on its large plot, with the rear elevation almost entirely devoted to full-height glazing in order to bring the outside views of the lake into the home. Strong lines and bold cladding colours add to the building's taut composition.

The main house includes an L-shaped double-height living space with a curved wall facing the lake, flowing into a dining area and kitchen on the ground floor. The bedrooms, a lobby and en suites are on the top level which can be accessed by a glass cylinder-encased lift. A separate annexe houses a guest suite and is linked to the main house via a series of rooms for entertaining.



MAGES: SAOTA



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UPFRONT

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"I Continue to Learn More on a Daily Basis"

We catch up with self-builder Joe Shimbart, who's building an energy-efficient oak frame house in Hampshire using natural materials



Since the groundworks began, things have gone very smoothly in general on site, with just a few items that required further attention. Getting the electricity connection and meter sorted took a little longer than planned for instance, but a petrol mixer hired for a couple of weeks got us out of trouble.

We are currently fitting the block and beam floor and thus completing the groundworks and then once the scaffolding goes up we will be ready for the next and most exciting stage — the arrival of the team from Carpenter Oak to erect the green oak frame.

I've been getting stuck in where I can, time allowing, and have greatly enjoyed being part of the build. I am sourcing all the materials for the build myself and so far it seems to be well worth the investment of my time with the significant savings. I continue to learn more about building on a daily basis and despite the pressures it remains an enjoyable process.

For more updates on Joe's project, visit homebuilding.co.uk/blogs

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Q. Would you be tempted to go for a pivot option when it came to your front door?

"Having worked on a couple of properties with pivot doors fitted I agree that they look nice in the right façade, however, they are expensive, heavy to handle during fitting, offer little (if any) increase in opening size, etc. They come with several negatives during installation and being used to be overcome or lived with for the sake of looking 'pretty'." Mark Ripsaw

"No, apart from it looking ugly, I think the dogs and the kids would constantly get parts, if not their whole body caught in it!" **Penny Tingey**

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UPFRONT

MATERIALS

Latest looks for finishes and fittings





Heritage Bathrooms' **30th Anniversary Collection** Celebrating the brand's 30th anniversary, Heritage Bathrooms have launched two one-off designs, 'Palm Springs' and 'Orchid' (shown), which will be featured on two of the brands bestselling ranges, Blenheim and Granley. Created by British designer Ali Munro, the collections will be available for a limited time only and will add a hint of colour to these traditional bathroom ranges. POA.

The Bar & Barman Kitchen from Marchi Group

Made in Italy, the unique handcrafted Bar & Barman kitchen from Marchi Group offers a charming design with timeless, characterful style. Manufactured using pewter, this durable material provides a vintage look to the bespoke cabinetry. POA.



Vitreo 202 Tiles from Ripples

Thomson's 10 **Year Roof Seal**

Thomson's 10 Year Roof Seal is easy to apply, protects your roof from the elements and flexes with the roof's natural movement. It is rainproof after just six hours and can be used to finish off felting or to cover an older surface. POA









1. CP Hart's Aquamass Bianco Mezzo Freestanding Bath costs £7,203.60 2. The Tubby Torre Aged Copper bath from Albion Bath Company costs £2,289 3. Victorian Plumbing's Grosvenor 1,700mm Double-

Ended Bath costs £349.94

Adding a bold splash of colour to your bathroom can provide the perfect contrast to white sanitaryware — as these striking yellow Vitreo 202 tiles, available from Ripples, go to show. Made using up to 55% post-consumer recycled glass, the bright mosaic tiles measure 20x20mm and cost £180/m².

S-Box Plus from Cardinal Innovations

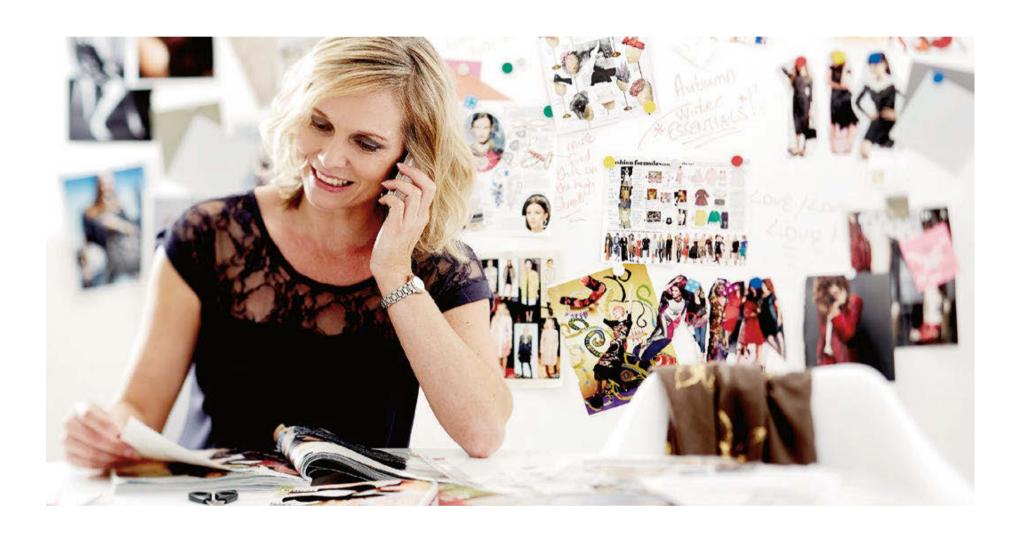
The new S-Box Plus from Cardinal Innovations offers an electric-free, easy to install, 'pop up' system, which is activated by the push of a finger and conceals a wide range of applications including power sockets, knives and spice racks — perfect for keeping your worktops clear and your splashbacks socket free. Thanks to the under-mounted facility you can also match your worktop or surface to create a streamlined look. POA.





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UPFRONT

THE LATEST

Events, news, tips and ephemera

Queen Announces Housing Bill in Opening Statement to Parliament

In the Queen's opening statement to Parliament on 27 May, details were revealed of the Housing Bill – intended to increase housing supply and home ownership – which will see the implementation of Right to Build as well as an extension of the Right to Buy scheme.

This statement comes as welcome news to many across the country who are looking to build or buy their own home in order to get on the property ladder, with the Bill including provisions to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants in order to place home ownership within the reach of an estimated 1.3 million people.

"The proposed extension of the Right to Buy policy will provide a boost for the housebuilding sector, as the full value of receipts from the sale of social housing and the most valuable council properties will have to be invested in building more affordable homes," says Michael Holmes, Content Director of Homebuilding & Renovating and Chair of the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA). It has been proposed that the chair of the Local Government Association's housing board will work closely with the Government to work out how the proposal to sell high-value council houses in order to build affordable homes could be funded.

The Housing Bill also includes Right to Build which will require local planning authorities to support custom build schemes and self-builders registered in the local community by identifying suitable plots of land with planning permission for them to either self-build or commission a local builder to build a home on.

A further benefit of the Housing Bill includes plans to deliver 200,000 new starter homes to be sold with a 20% discount to first-time buyers under 40.

For more information on the Government's Housing Bill, visit gov.uk/government/publications

Lack of Housing to Impact on Economy

Research carried out by the property group JLL suggests that if house prices continue to rise at the estimated rate of 20% in the next fives years, without a radical increase in new homes, some parts of Britain will be unaffordable for the younger generations who are already struggling to buy or even rent their own home.

The study warned that as the housebuilding industry is currently not equipped to deliver the number of homes needed and with the increasing population, this could have a direct impact on the UK economy.

Potton Show Home Receives a Makeover

The only facility of its kind in the UK, Potton's Self Build Show Centre attracts over 6,000 visitors every year, with four permanent show houses on site. Their newly remodelled Gransden show house has just



ALLEKION

been unveiled to the public — updating the popular show home to meet modern-day requirements.

"With family requirements and lifestyles constantly evolving, we wanted to bring this beautiful home right up to date and provide inspiration to anyone considering building or remodelling to create the home of their dreams," says Fae Perkins, Marketing Manager at Potton. "In order to achieve this, some major internal changes were required, notably the removal of a number of internal walls and an outside porch area." The home has also been adapted to include an open plan kitchen, relaxed dining space, a new energy-efficient LED lighting scheme, updated colour scheme and innovative heating controls.

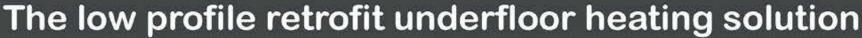
"The Heritage style home is extremely popular with our customers, therefore we wanted to ensure sensitivity towards the traditional elements to transform the whole house into a contemporary warm space."

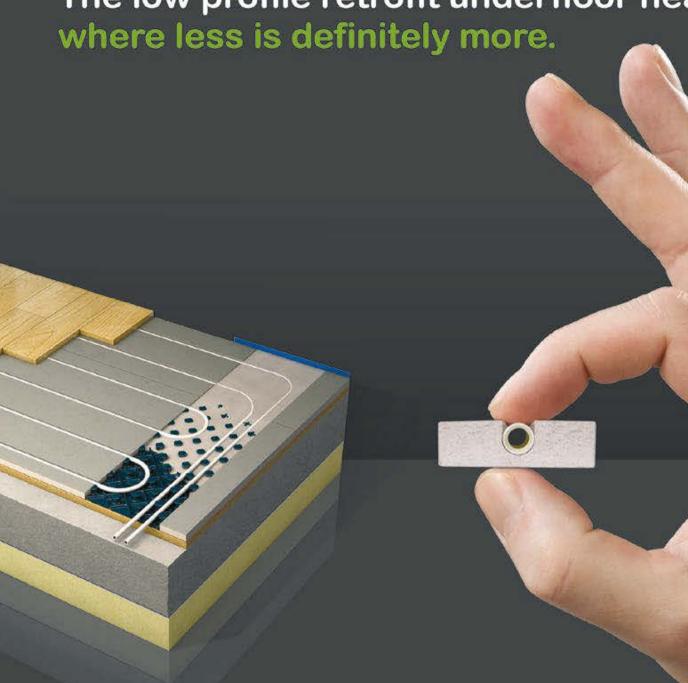
The Gransden and the three other Potton show homes can be seen at the Centre in St Neots. For opening hours and more information contact: 01480 403285

20% RHI Tariff Drop for Biomass Boilers

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) have announced that the degression – the mechanism used to control the budget by reducing the tariff – for the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) for biomass boilers has been passed. This means that the current biomass tariff of 8.93p/kWh will be reduced by 20% to 7.14p/kWh for all new applications made from 1 July 2015.

These tariff changes come as a result of the total amount of payments made being higher than the approved budget and will be up for review again in the next quarter. Note that the 1 July 2015 degression applies to biomass only, and the tariffs for air and ground-source heat pumps and solar thermal are not affected.





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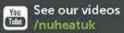


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This section: Everything you need to create a brilliant individual home — from ideas, expert guides and designers' advice to other people's inspiring projects



Homes

An Oak Frame Self-build P.38



Homes:

Modern Single Storey Living P.58



Homes:

A Contemporary Conversion P.24

Plus: ➤ A Gallery of Urban Self-builds P.36

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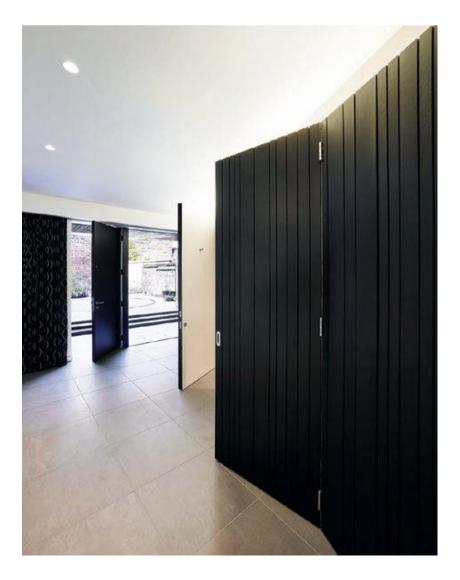




THE QUICK READ

- Natasha Marshall and Neil Fullerton have converted a former commercial building into a contemporary four-bed home in Glasgow's West End
- >>> Introducing a steel frame within the existing structure enabled the couple to include large areas of glazing in this previously dark building
- The urban property features a turning circle, which allowed the couple to maximise on outdoor garden space (as opposed to parking). There's also a roof terrace

atasha Marshall and Neil Fullerton's ambition to fashion a new family home from a tricky semi-derelict commercial building, located on a small back lane surrounded by the stately Victorian and Edwardian sandstone tenements of Glasgow's West End, was ambitious, but not foolhardy. Indeed, to prepare for the challenges of renovating this 'difficult' building – with its origins in the 1840s and with a hotch-potch of 1960s additions to boot – the couple actually cut their teeth on a similar conversion of a 19th-century commercial building, that's now their workplace, and located not too far from their new home.





"We learned a lot from the previous experience, which involved rebuilding and renovating a derelict printworks at the back of a city block," explains Neil, who managed both projects alongside Natasha and architect friends Stuart Cameron and Miranda Webster of Glasgow-based Cameron Webster Architects. "Both projects were similar in that they had tight lane access, which creates logistical challenges," says Neil.

The origins of Neil and Natasha's new home go back 15 years. "We lived in a flat opposite the lane for 13 years and we always said that if it came on the market we'd have to buy it," explains Natasha. "The original building was here before the tenements were built — the title deeds date from the 1840s. The previous occupant was an antiques restorer and there was also office space that we nearly rented out around 15 years ago."



A 'For Sale' sign went up in April 2010. "We opened the curtains in the sitting room one morning and saw the sign and phoned up right there and then," says Natasha. Following a chat with the sellers and planners, outlining their intention to convert the commercial property into a home, the couple eventually submitted a bid that was accepted.

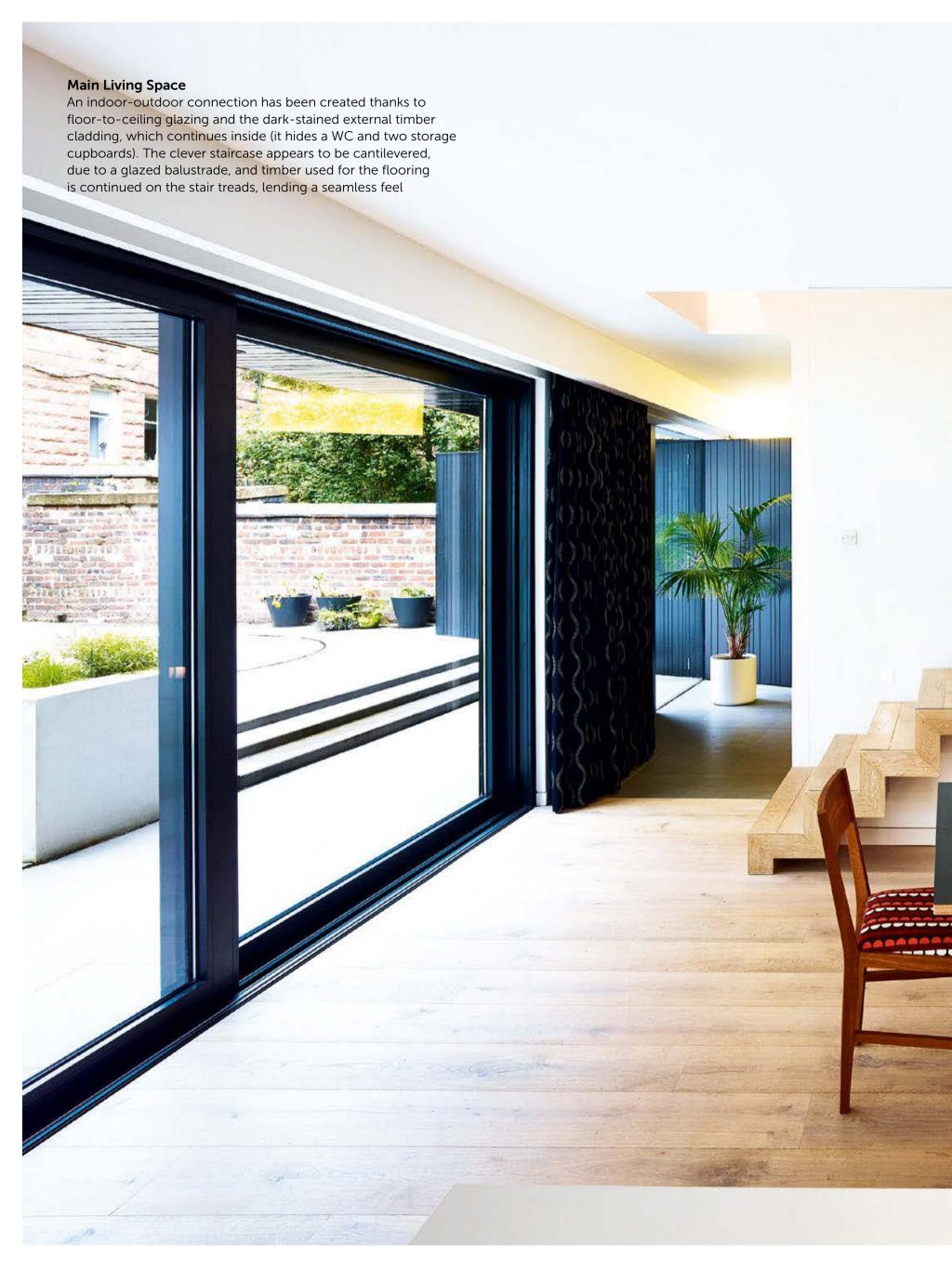
One particular issue to address with the planners was providing adequate parking for this urban home. "Part of receiving planning permission required us to demonstrate that we could approach the main street, in forward gear, not in reverse," says Natasha. "If we had committed the whole courtyard to parking we could have done a three-point turn, but we were also keen to have a garden. The turntable, which is steel with nylon rollers, allowed us to have a garden and separate driveway. You drive the car onto it and when

you're ready to go out you spin the car round by hand. The kids in the neighbourhood love it!"

Introducing Natural Light

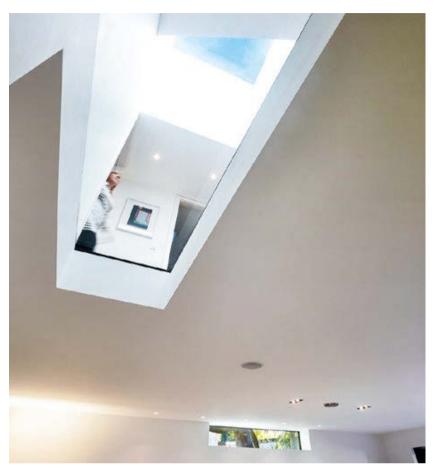
A good start was augmented by the fact that the building – which consisted of ground-level workshops and various upper-level timber office extensions – was in a good state of repair. "It was immaculate inside; the beams and concrete roof were sound. There were no maintenance issues... at that point," says Neil. A less-appealing aspect of the project was that it was a very dark building.

Bringing inside as much light as possible was the couple's main aim, but in order to do so, some major structural decisions had to be made. Essentially, the front section of the roof was taken away and the two interior walls and wall at the rear of the building had









to be removed to insert windows. At one point only the two side walls and three quarters of the roof remained.

However, the extensive structural work was well worth it — light now floods into the interior. "There are rooflights at the top of the building so when you walk upstairs you're looking up at the sky, which is a lovely effect," says Natasha. "And a slot has also been created in the middle of the living room so that there is always light. The little slot windows don't look as though they are doing a lot, but they're south facing so they bring in a lot of light for their size. These ended up being very expensive windows but definitely worth it in the end."

The first floor window louvres not only chime with the design, but they also have a very practical function. "Due to the fact that the tenements are so close we had to find a way of having a shower or bath with nobody seeing in. They are angled so that the surrounding flats can't see into the bathroom or bedrooms," says Natasha.

Creating a 21st-Century Exterior

The resulting four-bed home is arranged over three levels, with an upper-level loft living area and roof terrace. The clever floating effect of the first and upper floor extension over the glass panelled ground level has been achieved by a steel span across the length of the building tied to the two existing boundary walls. "There is effectively a steel frame inside the new structure," says Neil, who





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Left: Bathroom

The couple's love of sailing inspired the teak details in the main bathroom. "We got the idea of the window louvres from a hotel that we were staying in, in the British Virgin Islands, where louvres next to the shower looked out to the sea," says Natasha. The exterior louvres also lend privacy to the bedrooms (above)

visited the site regularly, hopping between work and the couple's nearby rental accommodation (they had sold their flat to raise funds for the build). "As well as the steel beam there are steel supports in the stair wall and in the corner where the utility room is located. The supports are cleverly concealed, which creates a real flow about the space."

The unusual cedar-clad upper extension connects cleverly to the ribbon-like black timber cladding on the ground floor. Aesthetically its effect is dramatic, but the design emerged from more practical considerations. "The shape of the front façade really hides what lies behind: the juncture between the new and existing structure," explains Neil. "The choice of the random cedar cladding and black painted timber, as well as the idea of the outside continuing inside – in this case the exterior shed going all the way through the house to form the main hallway – was inspired by some of the new buildings we saw during a trip to New Zealand."

Marrying Contemporary Design with Soft Interiors

The interior achieves a perfect balance between being both modern and soft. Natasha and Neil run a design studio in Glasgow, creating fabric ranges for various interior brands in the UK and Europe that sell into the interior industry worldwide. They designed all the fabrics in the house and had them specially recoloured to create "a soft palette that is really relaxing", explains Natasha.

In harmony with this soft, relaxing raison d'être are interior details such as the simple concrete slab fireplace, stove and log store, wide engineered whitewashed oak floorboards atop the underfloor heating and a clever lighting scheme.

"The whole house is really relaxing," concludes Natasha. "You can't believe you're in Glasgow's busy West End, you don't hear a thing — it's like a little oasis."



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The Project



Stuart Cameron Architect

THE ARCHITECT'S VIEW

The key aims of this project were to transform a semi-derelict workshop and office building into a calm, private city house. Using a limited budget and a carefully considered set of priorities, the dark and damp building was turned into a light, contemporary home for our clients, who wanted to stay living and working in the West End of Glasgow.

The house is accessed by way of a pend (passageway) below a tenement block and a narrow lane. It is oriented east/west, bordered to the north, south and east by the site boundary and adjacent back courts. The nature of the site, being surrounded by tenement blocks on three sides, allowed the consideration of different ways that daylight and sun could be brought into the plan, through the section. The views out of the house are carefully placed to retain privacy but allow a connection to the outside world, where framed views to cherry tree branches capture the changing seasons.

The car turntable creates a focus to the forecourt of the house; it also allows for off-street parking and a safe means of exiting the lane, onto the road, and was a requirement of the local planning department.

The ground and first floor plans are arranged around a three storey-high central lightwell, which draws sunlight into the heart of each floor. The single-aspect, open plan kitchen, dining and living area on the ground floor is naturally lit through high-level glazing on the southern boundary, a rooflight to the eastern edge and a glazed first floor landing, which filters light down through the lightwell. Patio doors lead to the west-facing private walled garden.

The first floor features four bedrooms and a family bathroom. A secondary staircase leads to a loft and roof terrace. The first floor plate was extended, cantilevered to prevent any direct view into the living space below from the surrounding tenements.

SUPPLIERS

Architect Cameron Webster Architects
cameronwebster.com; 0141 330 9898
Stove Stuv 21 Stirling Stove Centre
stirlingstovecentre.co.uk
Flooring Surface Plus (Glasgow)
surfaceplus.co.uk
Siematic Kitchen Riverside Kitchens
Glasgowriversidekitchens.co.uk
Windows Guardian Systems Stirling
guardiansystems.co.uk
Underfloor heating Mmaxx Glasgow
mmaxx.com
Cladding Vincent Timber
vincenttimber.co.uk
Bathroom and downstairs tiles Marazzi
Tiles CTDmarazzi.it/en; ctdtiles.co.uk
Fabrics Natasha Marshall
natashamarshall.co.uk

BUILD TIME

Mar 09 Purchase of land

Aug 10 Planning application

Oct 10 Planning granted

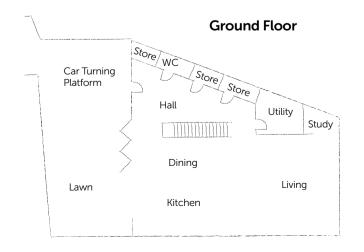
Dec 10 Building warrant applied for

May 10 Building warrant granted

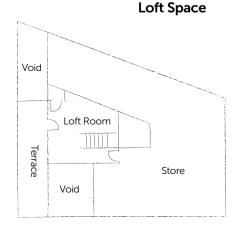
Jan 11 Internal strip out started

Apr 11 Work starts on site

Aug 12 Moved in







GALLERY

Urban Homes

Need ideas for a new home in the city or town? You've come to the right place



Red Squirrel Architects

Occupying a tight corner plot, you wouldn't think that this striking cedar-clad self-build was just 100m². Utilising space efficiently, the home even includes a sheltered courtyard



Crawford Partnership Two-thirds of this subterranean home is hidden from view at street level



Hugh Strange ArchitectsHiding this 75m² London home behind a high perimeter wall offers privacy



Designcubed Clever planning allows this single storey home to maximise every inch of available space on its tiny London plot



Belsize Architects

Adding a glazed basement extension provided this home with a light-filled studio



Niche Architects Replacing a 1950s end terrace with this new home allowed for a basement level to provide extra space



Studio Bednarski A grill-like window structure adds architectural interest to this end-terrace home in the heart of London



Carl Turner Architects Standing on a former brownfield site, this series of cantilevering boxes provides a striking exterior



John Osborn Design Bricks laid in Flemish bond and sash windows complement the neighbouring Victorian homes



Hunter Architects and PlanningThis new-build home sits on an infill plot and draws influence from the vernacular



MATT Architecture This self-build on a former garden plot is packed with exciting features — including a hidden entrance



IBLA Frameless glazing, crisp render and an extension have taken this home from a dull semi to a modern villa



Self-designedFrom 1970s office block to ultra-modern home — the solution for city living



Henning Stummel Choosing to convert an industrial building instead of building new can provide a characterful home



Liddicoat & Goldhill Born out of the constraints of a small site, this striking home uses a flat roof to minimise its impact



Halliday Clark Architects This three storey end terrace in Sheffield has been designed to complement the streetscape



Riach Architects A large glazed basement extension offers family living space to a terraced home in the heart of Oxford

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HOMES OAK FRAME SELF-BUILD



Above: Exposed Oak Frame

Happily admitting that they're 'beam people', June and Geoff chose to expose the oak frame throughout the home, providing instant character and charm. Materials have been carefully chosen to complement the frame, including the brick fireplace in the formal sitting room as well as the oak staircase (far right) in the double-height entrance hall

THE QUICK READ

➡ Geoff and June Gaffney, with the help of designer Pete
Tonks, have self-built a characterful new oak frame home on
a one-acre plot, with Oakwrights providing the oak frame

> The couple faced several set-backs, starting with a year-long planning battle over the home's design. Their builders also ran out of money towards the end of the project, leaving Geoff to complete a lot of the work himself

 The design of the finished house has been centred around the couple's large family
 it measures up at an impressive 445m² lenty of room to fit everybody in at Christmas was the most important factor when it came to the design of June and Geoff Gaffney's new home, which features a magnificent oak frame from Oakwrights. "We were actually planning on downsizing initially," says June, "but we needed to be sure that we could fit all 17 of us in, so the house just kept growing."

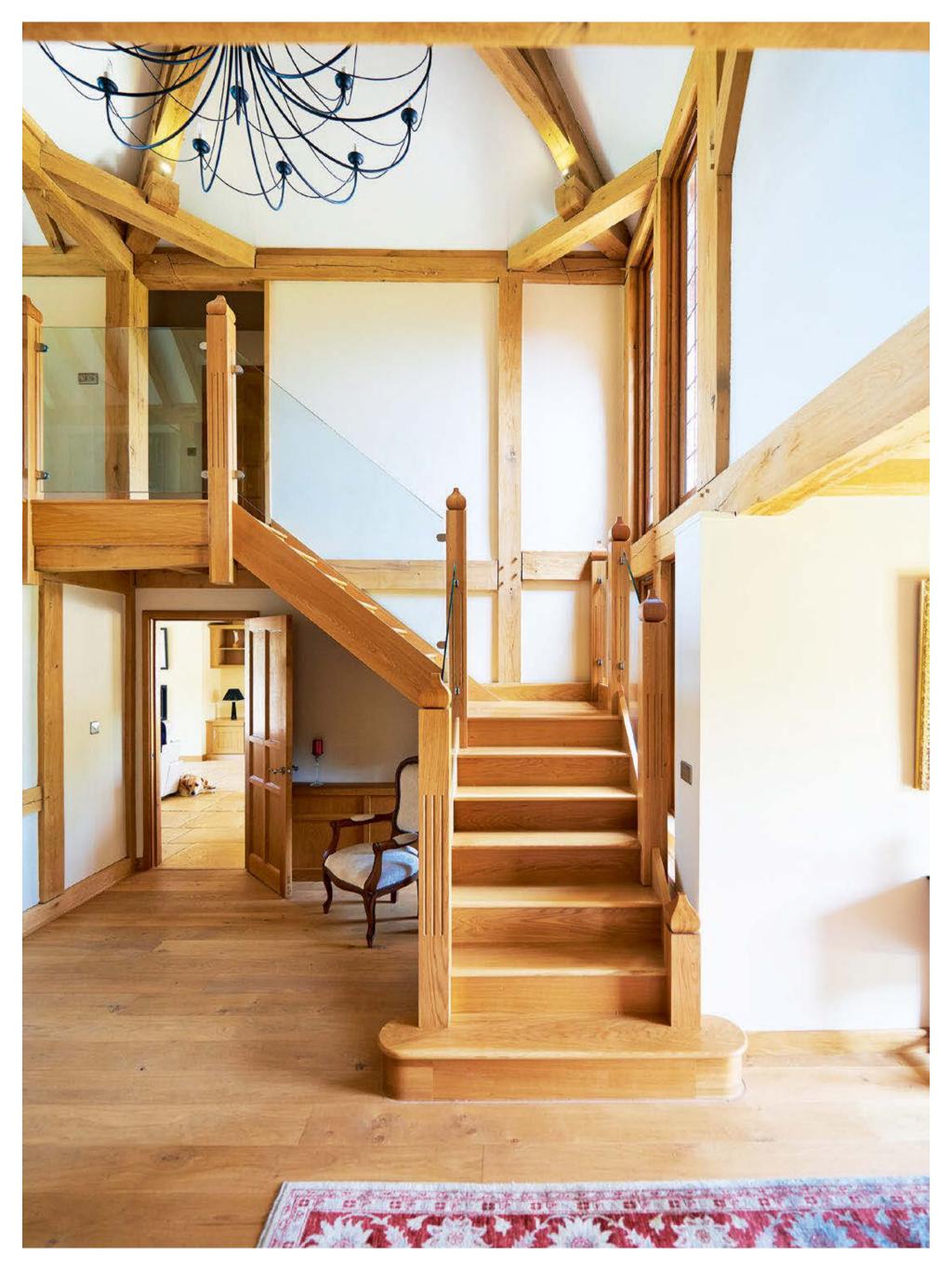
In 2009, the couple were happily living in Ibstone in a traditional cottage when they saw an advertisement in a local magazine for oak frame houses. On a whim they decided to order the brochure and quickly fell for the impressive designs. They promptly started looking for a plot to build a new home on.

By chance, a large plot came up for sale just down the road from their existing house which offered unrestricted views over the local countryside and ample space to build on. "I had always wanted to build my own home and everything just seemed to fall into place," says Geoff.

The couple put in an offer of £700,000 for the plot, which was duly accepted and then approached Oakwrights to design their new home. "There was a small 1950s chalet-style bungalow already in place which was demolished to make way for the new building. We wanted to really make the most of the views and the house's positioning," explains Geoff.

The design took around a year to perfect, as the couple honed their ideas and wishes for their new home. Initially the plans were for a more modest home, but after considering their large family, they chose to add two extra bedrooms and increase the footprint of the kitchen for entertaining.

>





HOMES OAK FRAME SELF-BUILD



Planning Difficulties

Once the couple were happy with the design, the plans were submitted to the local planning department for approval, who, unfortunately had reservations over the design. "They said that the type of house we wanted to build didn't blend in with the rest of the village," says June. "However, we knew that there were plenty of other brick and oak houses, so we went round and physically counted them so that we could put a case forward to support our design. Part of the front of our house is also rendered, as well as the brick, which again caused issues.

"As a result, the house needed to be slightly repositioned within the plot to make the most of the natural light and warmth from the sun," June continues. "We also had to install a ground-source heat pump (GSHP) as we weren't allowed to use oil for heating. These weren't problems as such; it's just how houses have to be built now so that they're more efficient. The GSHP has been brilliant though — really efficient and heats everything in the house well."

Finally, the couple had to agree to install a bike stand to meet the local planning authority's demands, which they complied with, and the plans were finally approved in 2011. "In the end we didn't have to make too many compromises — we essentially got everything we wanted, it just took time to tweak the design," June adds.

The Build

As a result of a year-long planning process, building work didn't start until February 2011. The builder began laying the foundations in April 2011 and once they were in, Oakwrights took over to erect the oak frame. "It was up within three weeks, which we were very impressed with," says Geoff. "There was a planning issue with the very narrow lane to the site which we overcame by making the

turning area big enough to turn an articulated lorry within the site. This meant no neighbour obstruction, and our neighbours were very accommodating during the build."

Once the frame was erected, the couple and their chosen builders were left to finish the build. Unfortunately for Geoff and June, the construction company that they worked with to finish the house ran out of money towards the end of the build. "The house was quite well done but we were let down badly in other areas and I am still rectifying a lot of the finishing work since they failed to complete everything, especially the snagging work," says Geoff.

An Accommodating Home

Perfectly fitting the couple's brief to have a home to house their large family during the Christmas period, their new oak frame home boasts five spacious bedrooms. "We could have probably fitted another one in, but we preferred to have more space in each room, rather than feeling crammed in," says June. There is also a comfortable sitting room off the galleried landing on the first floor,

Far Left: Kitchen Diner

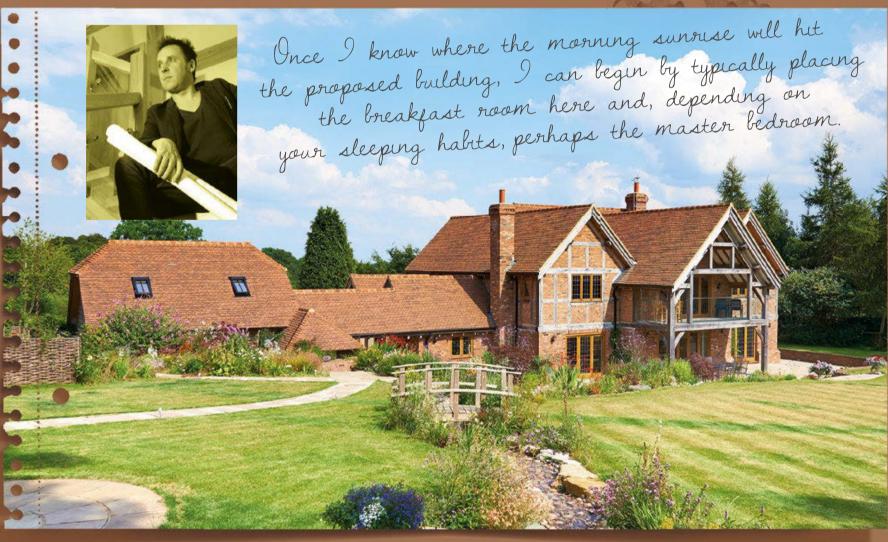
The single storey element of the dining space in the large open plan kitchen (from Anthony Mullan) allows for increased ceiling heights in this area of the home, creating a sense of space with a dramatic vaulted ceiling. Rooflights and full-height glazed panels between the frame have been added here to provide additional light

A DESIGN FOR LIFE

For most, designing and building your own oak frame home is a once in a lifetime experience. It is your chance to create something completely unique, a home that will not only serve your needs in the present, but one which will become your legacy, mellowing gracefully and repaying you with a lifetime of enjoyment. In recognition of this, Oakwrights cannot over-stress the importance of getting it right. We use only exceptional, seasoned, architectural designers to create our homes, designers such as Pete Tonks, who's lifetime of experience in designing for self-build has honed and refined his skills, specialising particularly in oak framing.

The build quality, accuracy and finish of an Oakwrights oak frame is legendary, but a home meticulously designed alongside our architectural designers is the stuff of dreams.

















Above and Right: Rear Balcony

A dramatic oak frame balcony leading out from the upper sitting area to the rear offers a sheltered spot to enjoy the views of the countryside, with glazed panels providing uninterrupted views from both inside and out

showcasing the beautiful exposed oak beams, with a large balcony that overlooks the surrounding countryside.

Downstairs, the kitchen/dining/sitting room space has been particularly successful, as June says: "The kitchen was important because everyone seems to gather in there. We also opted for a formal dining room, which can comfortably seat 20 people, so suits our family life well." The informal dining space in the kitchen also sits within a single story section of the house and so benefits from rooflights and views out over the garden.

To further increase the sense of space throughout the house, a double-height atrium features a wrap-around staircase, complete with glass balustrade, which offers a grand entrance. The oak frame gives the whole house a warm and welcoming atmosphere and is perfectly in line with the look that the couple wanted to achieve. "One of our previous homes was a converted barn and our old house not far from here was a traditional cottage, so I think you're either a beam person, or you're not," says June.

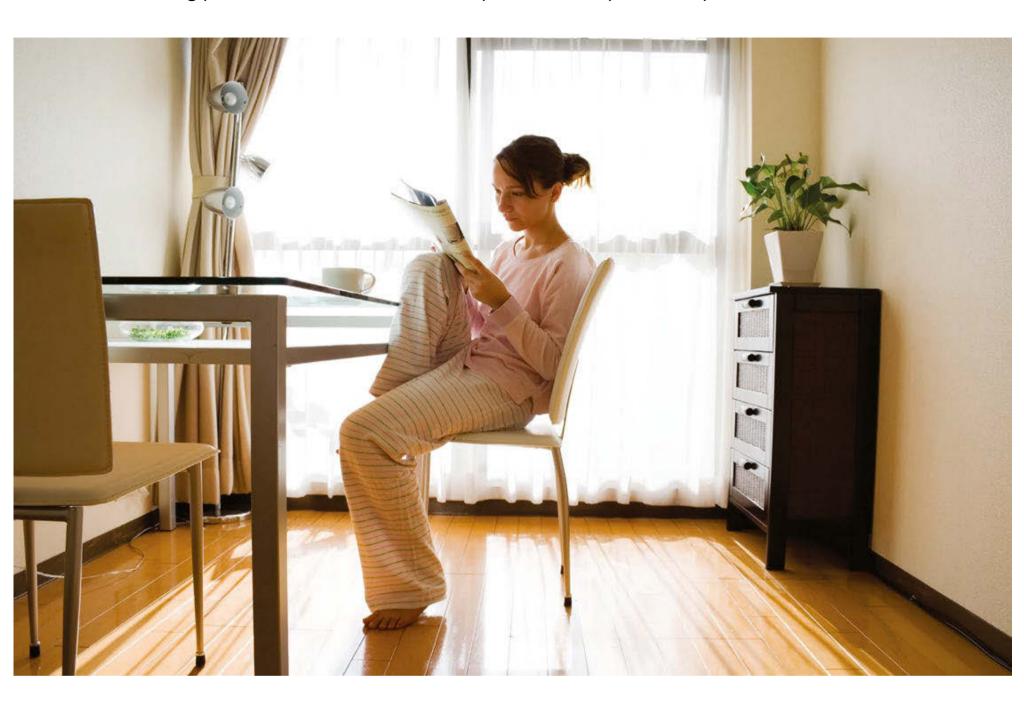
Contrary to the planners previous concerns over the new home fitting in with its surroundings, the Gaffney's oak frame home on its rural one-acre plot looks perfectly at ease nestled among its more mature neighbours.

"We didn't think we would ever build our own house," admits June. "When the children were growing up, sometimes you have these dreams but don't ever think you will be able to fulfil them. As we got older and circumstances changed, we just decided to go for it. If the plot hadn't come up, we might never have done it, but everything just seemed to happen at the right time." •



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HOMES OAK FRAME SELF-BUILD

The Project



Geoff and June Gaffney Homeowners



Pete Tonks Designer

HOMEOWNERS' VIEW

We love the house — it is a lovely family home enjoyed by all of our family. Our only mistake was not to have a study in the house; instead it is over the garage.

The design of the home was definitely a shared concept — part us and part Pete. Oakwrights were excellent and the product is first class, and overall the finished project works well.

Our favourite part of the house is the upstairs living room and the balcony off it, with views over the fields and the hills and valley in front — we often eat out there and also entertain there. Our children love the kitchen/sitting area with the conservatory off it and they all gather in there while June cooks.

DESIGNER'S VIEW

June and Geoff's project was a real delight for me as both designer and planning specialist, for the simple reason that it was difficult. The project involved a replacement dwelling in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The existing dwelling was pretty small but June and Geoff's aspirations were pretty big!

The challenge for me was to gain planning permission for a large house, as a replacement for a bungalow which was around a quarter of the size.

In strict planning terms, the whole scheme did not meet the relevant policies. It was considered, however, that due to the high level of design, eco specification, sensitivity of materials and details that we employed, that on balance our scheme represented an enhancement to the plot and the area in general — making a positive contribution to the landscape.

In summary, we designed an amazing family home which June and Geoff love while at the same time keeping the planners happy. And that, quite simply, is what we do!

SUPPLIERS

Oak frame Oakwrights	
oakwrights.co.uk; 01432 353353	
Designer Pete Tonks pjtdesign.co.uk	
Kitchen Anthony Mullan01628 632033	
AGA stove Edwards & Godding	
0118 939 3046	
Bathrooms Stonewood	
stonewood.uk.com	
Woodburing stove Country Stoves	
01628 528262	
Ground-source heat pump Ice Energy	
iceenergy.co.uk	
Flooring Stephen James Hunt Carpets	
01494 717131	
Windows, rooflight, doors, stairs, joinery	
Traditional Window & Conservatory	
Company01753 547111	

PROJECT TIMELINE

Jun 09 Plot purchase

Oct 09 Preplanning stage

Mar 10 Planning permission granted

Feb 11 Building work started on site

Apr 11 Foundations dug

Sep 11 The building's shell is made watertight

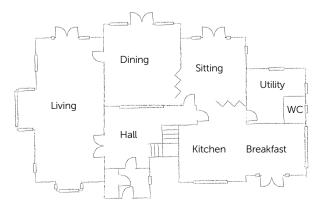
Oct 11 First fix works carried out

Dec 11 Second fix works carried out

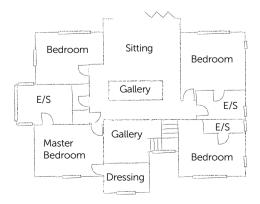
Mar 12 Final decorations to the interiors

May 12 Moved in

Ground Floor



First Floor





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DESIGN DETAIL

Beautiful Dormers

A good dormer can be the crown jewel on a lovely house — a badly designed one can be an affront to the senses. Natasha Brinsmead explains how to do dormers well



DESIGN DETAIL DORMER WINDOWS

ormers are a classic part of the British building vernacular and typically associated with traditional-style properties. Specified on a practical level to introduce more light and head height than a simple rooflight, and aesthetically to break up 'massy' rooflines, they have developed an unfortunate reputation in recent decades as a result of badly designed loft conversions. Luckily, architects and designers are beginning to reassess them for the modern home and at the same time are doing them better than ever on traditional properties. So how do you make sure your dormer is a good one?

Planning Permission

The addition of a dormer window will often require planning permission. (If your home is listed or lies within a Conservation Area it will always require planning permission.) For example, if the dormer is to be placed on a roof slope which forms the principal elevation of the house and fronts a highway, or the dormer will extend above the ridgeline of the property, planning will be required. Planning consent will also be required when the dormer features a balcony or veranda, or would increase the area of the original roof space by more than 40m^3 .

However, if the dormer window is going to be on a roof that does not front a highway then you should be able to proceed without planning permission.

Construction

A dormer window is basically a vertical window with its own roof. They are at least partially positioned within the slope of the roof.

Installing a dormer window is a fairly complicated process, more disruptive than a rooflight installation and, in all honestly, best left to the professionals. A section of the roof is cut out, a frame for the dormer constructed and supports for the new window put into place. There is also the matter of insulation — get this wrong and the thermal efficiency of the whole roof can be compromised.

A dormer window is typically made up of a timber frame projecting from a pitched roof. They usually comprise of a roof, two sides or 'cheeks', and a window at the front. Most dormers will be 'projecting' – positioned entirely above the line of the pitched roof – although others are recessed or semi-recessed.

Although their construction varies, dormer windows are often cut into the eaves of a building and installed on one-and-a-halfstorey buildings to allow light into the rooms within the roof space.

Insulation

If you are insulating the dormer window at the same time as the main roof, this will be a far easier task than retrofitting insulation into an existing dormer.

If you are, however, adding insulation to an existing dormer, your main aims should be to upgrade the thermal performance of the dormer window as much as possible, to add enough insulation to the dormer to prevent heat loss, and to prevent 'cold bridging' to ensure that airtightness is maintained around the dormer, but that ventilation paths to any ventilated roof spaces above the dormers are not disturbed. Finally, you should minimise the risk of corrosion to the underside of any lead used to clad the dormer cheeks or roof.

The effectiveness of insulation to the main roof can be significantly compromised if dormer windows are left uninsulated. In most cases, the only space available to insulate the cheeks will be within the spaces between the elements of the frame. This may mean insulation thicknesses of 75mm or less, which is not normally enough to meet Building Regulation targets. To make the insulation work effectively it should be packed consistently into all corners of the spaces, otherwise cold bridging will be likely. It is also a good idea to add a thin layer of insulating board either outside or inside the frame — even 20mm can have a big impact on the overall insulation value. Kingspan offer good solutions.

Positioning and Style

The key to getting dormer windows right is all down to style, positioning and proportions. Dormers should be carefully positioned to respect the symmetry of the building, regularly spaced – not too close to the edge of the roof – and balanced in their size.

Dormers can look better if they are set well in from the eaves and ridge. In terms of positioning, dormers tend to be at their best when placed well down from the main ridge of the house — slightly lower than halfway down the roof is ideal.

Aim for the pitch of the dormer's roof to mirror that of the house or surrounding houses — note that keeping the pitch of the dormer the same as that on the roof means you can have tiled rather than lead valleys. Dormer roofs can be pitched with a gable end, hipped or half-hipped, flat or curved, or be mono-pitch.

The most commonly seen dormer roof is pitched with a central ridge, which creates a neat triangular gable above the window. Others are hipped at the front or have roofs that slope to the front (sometimes called a catslide roof). Thatched roofs and cottage roofs suit dormers with matching roofing materials that curve at the sides, creating a smooth 'eyebrow-shaped' dormer (see p. 49).

The other common form of dormer roof has a flat roof. These are actually slightly pitched to allow rainwater to run off and are commonly covered with lead, zinc, copper, asphalt or felt.

Constructing the dormer roof in the same style as the main roof – i.e. a hipped roof with a hipped roof – looks best and on roofs with a shallow pitch (usually covered with slate), a flat-roofed dormer generally works better than one with a steeply pitched roof.

In terms of shape, study the shapes within your home's existing design and aim to repeat these shapes within the dormer window in order to help it blend in as much as possible.

Although the material used for the roofs of dormers is usually the same as that found on the main roof, a dormer window is actually the ideal way to introduce a new material. Cedar shake shingles, tile hanging and weatherboarding used for the cheeks, for instance, all look great. Just make sure to create some visual cohesion with the rest of the house in some way, by matching the paint colour on the windows, for example. Of course dormer cheeks can match the roof covering, but more often they are of lead or wooden boarding. Masonry cheeks are unusual because of the weight they add to the roof structure.

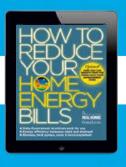
When it comes to proportions, beware of going too big. Two or more small dormer windows tend to look better than one large, overpowering dormer — although this is a slightly more expensive option. And finally, aim not to exceed 1.2m in width. •



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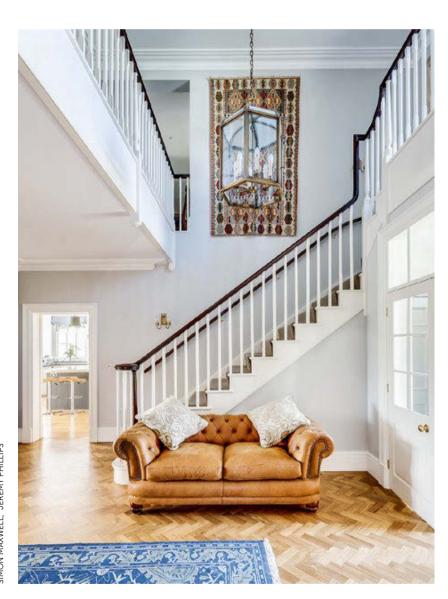
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INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

Hallways Design Guide

Far from an overlooked dump for coats, shoes and bags, the hallway sets the tone for the house and should be designed carefully, says Natasha Brinsmead



Make it Special

The hallway is generally the room into which both you and your visitors are welcomed into the home and as such deserves to be treated with as much care as any other room in the house. Yet, all too often this area gets plonked way down on the priority list. It becomes a dumping ground for coats, bags and shoes and it is surprising how little thought is often given during the design stage to important factors such as natural light and storage, ceiling height and the like. In order to provide your home with an inviting entrance, consider how this space will work in the planning and design stage.

Consider Available Space

In terms of space and location, a centrally located hallway is the ideal, with all rooms leading off this area — Georgian house designers had this down to a fine art. However, this is not always possible — particularly in semi-detached houses or in renovations. If you have nothing more than a claustrophobic space in front of the staircase, aim to steal space from elsewhere. Removing the wall dividing the hallway and an adjacent room, creating a side extension or converting an attached garage may all be options, as can doing away with the conventional entrance hall in favour of a dining hall.

SIMON MAXWELL; JEREMY PHILLIPS

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE HALLWAYS

>>> Designers on How to Plan Hallways



Architect
Niall Maxwell,
Rural Office For
Architecture
Ruralofficeforarchitecture.co.uk

"Consider Width, Daylight and Views"

Hallway design tends to be the poor relation in most contemporary housing. It performs the essential role of entrance, weather barrier, orientation device and circulation, but never gets seen as a habitable room in its own right. Hence why, with many houses, this space ends up being cluttered with bikes, bags and shoes, and is usually an afterthought once the main spaces have been planned — rather ironic when it's the first thing you encounter upon entering a property.

Hallways need to be considered as the fulcrum to a property — the centre where everything happens and from where you orientate yourself. This means considering daylight and views, storage and seating, and most importantly width, providing space to pass people or stored objects.



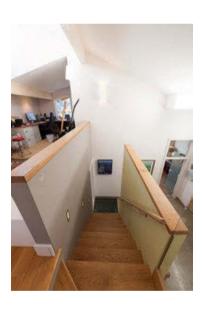


Architect
Robert Evans,
Evans Vettori
Architects
evansvettori.co.uk

"Hallways Should Regain their Status"

When designing houses, nowadays there is often pressure to minimise the hallway in favour of larger living areas and bedrooms. The hallway in many modern houses is no more than a three foot-wide corridor with the staircase off, resulting in the inevitable game of 'sardines' when the family arrive to visit. A squarer space, with a wide front door and enough room to hang up your raincoat while talking, makes all the difference — even better if there is enough space for a piano, from whence music can waft through the house!

A generous hallway can create an overall impression of space without necessarily having a large floor area. In the example of a house we recently designed in Matlock (right), the ceiling slopes up to a 'crow's nest' attic space, overlooking the hallway. Rather than being considered a 'waste of space' it's surely time for the hallway to regain its status as the opening sonata to the house's symphony.





Architect **Darren Bray** is

Associate Director

PAD Studio

padstudio.co.uk

"Mix Style and Storage"

Hallways have to be both practical and stylish. They must contain storage for coats, shoes or bags and achieving this by hiding storage within panelled walls is a great idea.

In many of the houses we design at PAD Studio, the materials on walls, floors and ceilings lead a visitor into the heart of the house, continuing the hallway theme. Opening up hallways to the first floor and roof, by creating a double-height space, can add drama — we have even added long strip rooflights in a new house. This just gives a bit of wow and sparkle to a hallway, giving views of the sky (right). Bringing visitors through a low-entrance ceiling into these volumes can create an explosion of space with a double-height galleried element.

Lighting is also critical — you don't want to overpower a hallway with artificial light. Contemporary pendant lights can be really effective.



VIGEL RIGDEN; SIMON DENISON; EVANS VETTORI

FARROW & BALL (FARROW-BALL.COM) X2; ALHAMBRA HOME (ALHAMBRAHOME.CO.UK); ORIGINAL STYLE (ORIGINALSTYLE.COM)

Plan in Storage

Great storage solutions are key to this space working well. Even if you are limited on size, wall hooks and shelving, along with pigeon hole-style cabinets, revolutionise busy mornings when you are searching for coats, scarves and keys. Shoe storage is a must and if you have the space available, a bench or some seating works well too. Incorporating storage into the staircase or above doorways are clever ideas that take up zero floor space.





Don't Forget Lighting

When it comes to a lighting design, downlights provide good back-ground lighting and ensure the space is well-lit for tasks such as taking coats off whatever the hour. However, for a cosier, more homely feel, lamps placed on side tables and wall uplights give a nice glow.



Design in Natural Light

Ensure there is plenty of natural light coming into the space so that the hallway isn't dingy. If there is no scope for including a window, a partially glazed door or one with a fanlight or sidelights will bring light in. If privacy is an issue, using frosted glass or a stick-on window film will solve the problem. Likewise, high-level clerestory windows, lightpipes and even rooflights, depending on the design of the house, are all great ways to draw in plenty of light without attracting the gaze of passers-by.



Choose your Floor Covering Wisely

Carpet rarely works well in a hallway. This is a space where you enter the house, often wearing dirty shoes, and where leaves, pebbles and the like get trodden and blown in from outside — it acts as a buffer zone. Hard flooring such as stone and tile, or wooden floors, are easier to clean quickly and more hardwearing. If you are worried about the hall looking too sterile, a rug well inside the front door or a stair-runner softens the look. $oldsymbol{\Theta}$





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REMODELLING





Before & After

A 1970s dwelling is transformed into a comfortable home with kerb appeal

he existing 1970s property sat on a large wood-land plot and, while it offered ample accommodation, the room sizes were unbalanced. There were two large reception rooms to the front and a series of smaller spaces to the rear. With the surrounding properties being grander in scale, there was opportunity to upgrade this home.

In order to boost kerb appeal, we proposed a traditional design, with the existing red brick at ground level covered in render, and stone string courses and corbelled brickwork on the first floor under larger overhanging eaves. A new slate roof

with lead roll-top dormers and replacement sliding sash windows with stone detailing complete the new style.

To the rear, a contemporary single storey glazed extension with flat roof and powder-coated aluminium fascias provides strong contrast to the main dwelling, as well as providing the rear of the house with much-needed additional space. The new hipped roof has also made way for an additional storey.

Inside, the ground floor has been opened up to create a large open plan kitchen/family room and one of the re-

Tony Holt is an architectural designer and chartered architectural technologist specialising in bespoke property design

ception rooms has been reduced in size to make way for a double-height entrance hall. A new garage block provides space for three cars with annexe above. The six small bedrooms on the first floor have also been reconfigured to offer four double bedrooms, three en suites and a family bathroom. A secondary staircase leads to the new second floor, with two further double bedrooms and a separate bathroom.

The house now provides 356m² of luxury space, which is comparable with the neighbouring properties. The accommodation is more balanced and the most important spaces have been increased in size where needed. Externally the ap-

pearance has been transformed, and a new style created that helps the property to achieve its full potential in terms of kerb appeal and value.

KEY SUPPLIERS



Silver Lining

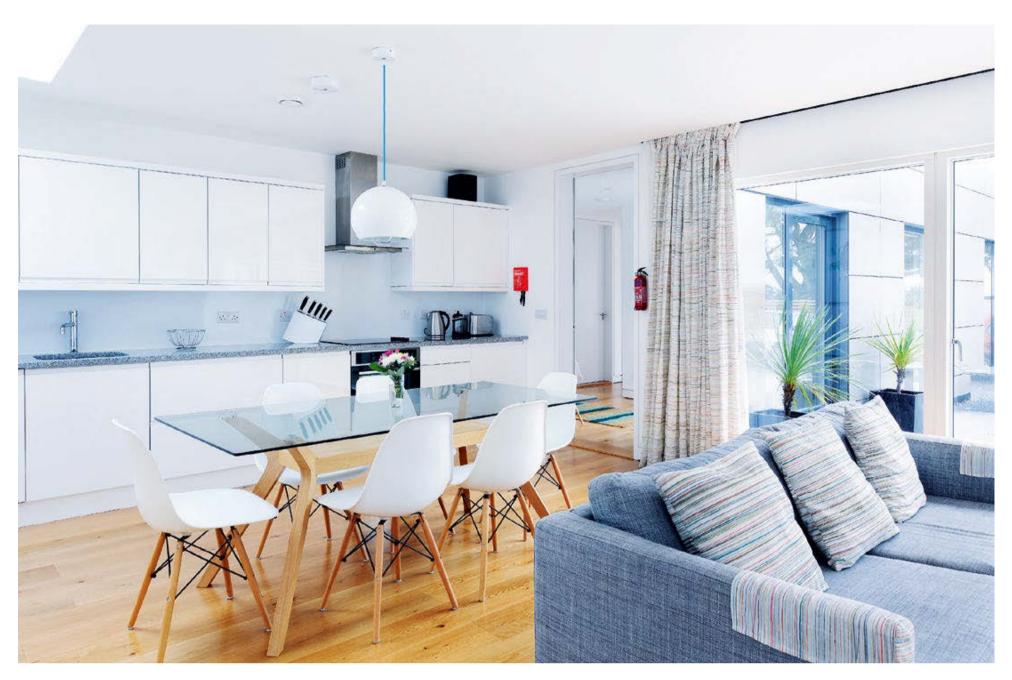
Paul and Lesley Dadson have transformed a challenging plot into the site of a new home that proves contemporary design can be interesting and affordable

Words: Alexandra Pratt Photography: Nigel Rigden











THE QUICK READ

- Paul and Lesley Dadson have built a single storey home on a challenging site. Studio West Architects designed the Cornish contemporary new build so that the coastal view can be enjoyed from the main living space
- >>> The timber frame structure is clad in low-maintenance fibre-cement boards from Marley Eternit. The detailing was complex, but the resulting exterior is striking
- >>> Keeping the floorplan and form simple allowed the couple to create a high-spec home for just £160,000

fter holidaying in St Ives for many years, Lesley and Paul Dadson started to think about buying a property in this picturesque town in west Cornwall, known for its artists who come for the unique light.

Having self-built their main home in Taunton,

however, a new project was the last thing on their minds. "But then we found this site," says Paul. "It was the view; we felt we could do something here."

The plot in question was a fairly tight piece of land at the end of a private no-through road, but crucially, it sits atop a hill overlooking the old town and the sweep of bay beyond. It threw up several issues, however, that needed to be resolved before Paul and Lesley could close the deal, and this process took almost a year. As is so often the case with private roads, there was uncertainty as to who was responsible for maintaining it, as well as problems regarding drainage, which crosses a neighbour's property. Getting services up to the site also proved a headache.

Designing a Contemporary Home

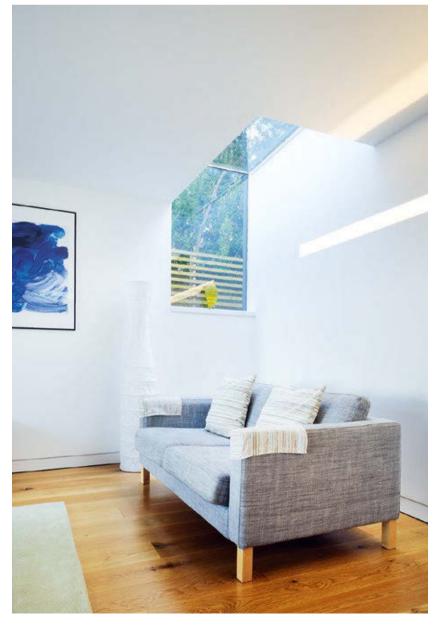
With the plot secured, Paul and Lesley turned their attention to the existing planning permission and decided to resubmit plans for their own design. Despite Paul's career as a conservation officer, the couple were firm in their desire for a contemporary build. "We knew what we wanted: something very light and minimal," says Lesley. The constraints of the site and location also meant the build had to remain compact, with a low ridge height. But there were advantages. "With no road frontage, we didn't have to worry about copying neighbours' styles," says Paul.

When looking around for a suitable architect, Paul and Lesley quickly found Neil Wall from local practice Studio West Architects. "He understands contemporary design and is on our wavelength," says Paul. Over the next three months, plans emerged for a crisp, modern single storey home with a flat roof, designed around the principle of making the view available from the living areas.

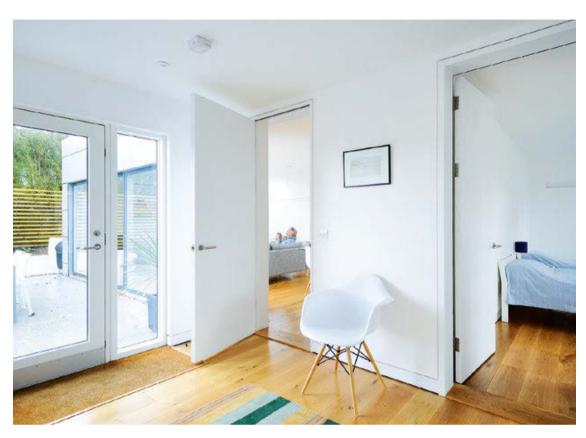
The Cladding

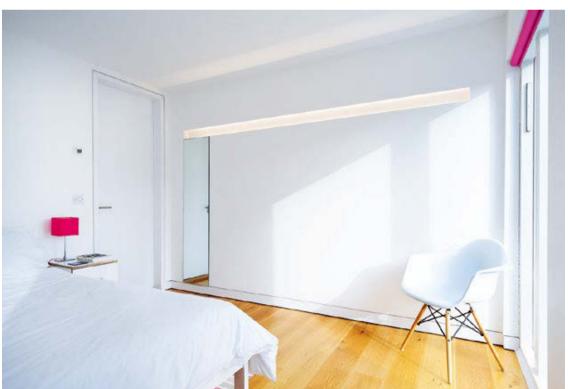
The unusual grey fibre-cement board cladding was an early choice in the design process, and Paul's inspiration was a contemporary slate-hung extension to the Victorian art gallery in nearby Newlyn. "The building is gorgeous," he says. That sharp, clean look is one he wanted to emulate. Although used frequently on agricultural





>







The corner where the two sides of the L-shaped design meet provided a good place to position the entrance hall — off which the living space and bedrooms (including the master bedroom, above, and main bathroom) lead. The couple decided on including a third bedroom, which replaced a planned utility, meaning the boiler and mechanical recovery heat ventilation system are now housed within cupboards in the entrance hall

Top Right: Front and Rear Elevations

The low-maintenance, powder-coated aluminium windows from Velfac dissect the rear elevation, exactingly positioned so as to bring light into the bedrooms and bathrooms (including the master en suite, right), without compromising on privacy. The sleek fibre-cement boards from Marley Eternit are installed on timber battens — meaning there's no fixing holes in sight







and commercial buildings, their architect Neil had also previously used the product on a Grade II* listed building in the Devon town of Sidmouth.

"When Paul came across Marley Eternit's Equitone fibre-cement boards, the aesthetic detail of the house changed," adds Neil. "The horizontal panels informed the flat roof. This was useful both in terms of cost, but also in lowering the ridge height of the building and reducing massing." The slate-gray colour is reminiscent of traditional local roofs and walls, and formed an integral part of the case they presented to the local planning office, which was ultimately successful. It's all about 'material context', as Paul suggests.

The fibre-cement board is low maintenance, although it was quite a challenge to get the final look right. Setting out around the windows was fairly complex and Neil had to do individual calculations for each panel. In order to eliminate fixing holes in the panels, they attached battens to the structure to which they, in turn, attached the panels using structural adhesives.

Building to a Budget

The build also needed to be affordable. "The cost per square metre was fundamental," says Paul, who set the initial budget at £143,000 for a 98m² build. Neil produced several highly detailed drawings to get 'cost certainty' for the project. Although this budget puts the build in the 'affordable' bracket, their design ambitions also meant large areas of glazing and the fibre-cement cladding had to be included in that price. (The latter cost a weighty £18,000.)



Both finishes and the contemporary style formed part of the objections made by the Town Council and neighbours. Despite this, after four months and some informal pre-application discussions, the Dadsons' plans were passed and the contract for a main contractor put out to tender, eventually going to local firm Level Construction. "It was too far away for us to project manage ourselves," explains Lesley.

A highly insulated timber frame was the construction system of choice. "It's quick and provides an airtight build," says architect Neil Wall. "I wouldn't think of anything else, due to the standards of insulation compared to wet methods," adds Paul. Together with Neil, the couple chose to use steels for the large spans across the sliding windows, sourced from Velfac, to the front.

The windows allow for some passive solar gain, although the property is cosy largely thanks to a gas-fired boiler supplying the underfloor heating. A mechanical ventilation heat recovery system also keeps the air fresh with low humidity (as well as passing warm air to the bedrooms).

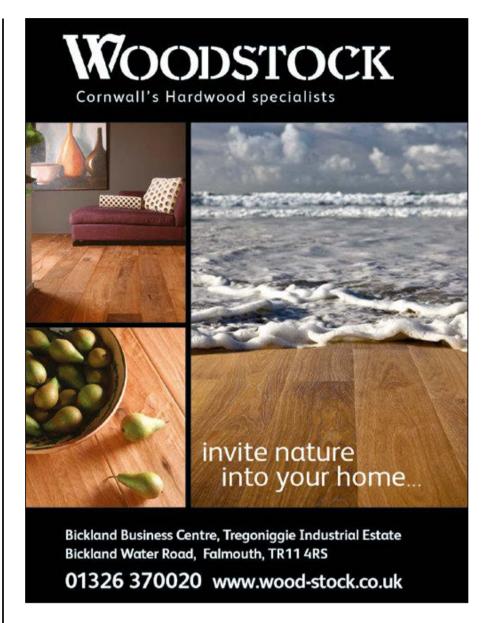
When it came to the interiors, the design morphed from two bedrooms to three following the couple's decision to sacrifice the utility room, but this was compensated for by a clever use of storage space throughout. "I worked out where everything was going before the build," adds Lesley, who also designed the kitchen. She then sourced this from Magnet, plus some quality detailing and a granite worktop. This was paired with an inexpensive but chic bespoke aluminium splashback.

The pared-back style is continued throughout the interior, with clever detailing such as shadow gaps around the doors – in place of traditional architraves – and tall, elegant internal doors. This attention to detail and careful use of space certainly gives the property a high-spec feel, which belies the eventual budget of just £160,000 (the overrun due in large part to delays in the ground works during a wet winter).

The Dadsons plan to retire to the resulting contemporary house, but for the moment enjoy it as holiday home, and also let it out for others to enjoy. "We love it here... the light and the views," says Paul. "But I also loved the journey."

■ Ispoyntel House is available for holiday rental: ispoyntel.co.uk







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The Project



Neil Wall Architect

THE ARCHITECT'S VIEW

We designed the house to be single storey due to the planning considerations — but being all on one level also meant that it was possible to establish good relations between the rooms and outdoor space. This inside-outside connection, which has been at the heart of modern architecture for many decades, was one of Paul and Lesley's priorities from the outset.

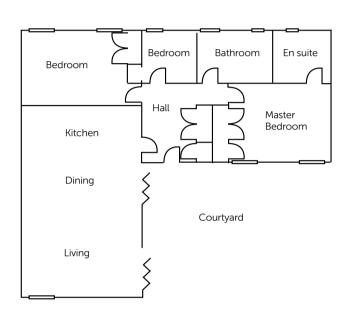
Space was maximised on this urban plot by setting the house back in the north-west corner, leaving the site open to the preferred east and south sides for solar gain and for the stunning sea vista east over St Ives harbour.

A semi-private courtyard wrapped within two arms of the L-shaped building was pivotal to the success of this house. The one sea view was key to the placement of the courtyard and the open plan living, dining, kitchen space behind (west). Full-height glazing here makes the most of the view.

The other wing houses the three bedrooms – including the master with en suite – and a large family bathroom. The Dadsons wanted the master bedroom to have a relationship with the semi-private courtyard, so full-height glazing features here, too. There are very interesting visual connections from the living area to the master bedroom.

The courtyard is orientated south and east for sun, with the rear of the two wings blocking the predominant westerly winds. The family bathroom and en suite sit on the rear west and north-facing elevation. One double bedroom faces the rear but also has full-height glazed sections with a view into a private landscaped garden area.

It was key that the internal floor area was minimal in order to minimise potential costs. It is a very efficient plan, at only 98m², providing three bedroom accommodation on one level.



SUPPLIERS

Architect Neil Wall of Studio West Architects
studiowestarchitects.co.uk; 01736 788892
Kitchen Magnetmagnet.co.uk
Main contractor Level Construction
01736 756204; levelconstruction.info
Up-and-over window Timber Tektimber-tek.co.uk
Cladding Marley Eternit Equitone Natura fibre-cement panels
marleyeternit.co.uk; 01283 722588
Wood flooring Woodstockwood-stock.co.uk
Electrician Tristan Weidner07966 663837
Bathrooms Victoria Plumbvictoriaplumb.com
Doors and windows Velfacvelfac.co.uk
Underfloor heating Timoleon Toron Systemtimoleon.co.uk
External granite paving Nu-Stonenustone.co.uk
Gate maker Richard Johns01736 333412

SELECTED COSTS

External work (including groundworks,	
driveway, landscaping)	£22,000
Building work (including windows,	
roof covering and cladding)	£77,000
Fit out (including kitchen, flooring,	
plumbing and electrics)	£28,000
Preliminaries	£7,000
Fees/additional miscellaneous	£26,000

QUICK IDEAS

Timber Worktops: The Five-Minute Expert

Timber has an enduring appeal as a worktop material despite its (deserved) reputation for being high maintenance. Natasha Brinsmead investigates



Water-Resistant Woods

If you are worried about water damage to your timber worktops – a common problem around the sink area – opt for timbers that have high moisture resistance. Hardwoods are best, with teak and iroko being particularly good options due to their high oil content.

Other timbers which are perfect for worktops include oak, maple, beech, cherry and walnut — wenge is a popular choice for those seeking a more exotic wood. Do check that any timber you choose comes from a sustainable source though and is FSC-accredited.

Expect Maintenance

There is no point investing in a timber worktop unless you are prepared for a little maintenance work. On a day-to-day basis, spills should be mopped up as soon as possible and you should avoid putting anything hot down on the surface (invest in trivets).

When timber worktops are first fitted they must be sealed with Danish or linseed oil a couple of times. You will then need to repeat this every day for a week. After that, once a week for the following month, then once a month for the first year. And finally, regularly thereafter.



FOR TIMBER WORKTOP SUPPLIERS See page 159 or visit homebuilding.co.uk/sourcebook







Timber worktops are usually sold in 3m lengths. Although the standard width is 600mm, wider pieces are readily available for island units and breakfast bars - just remember that you will require two or more 'good edges' either side, which can be shaped as they are fitted on site by your kitchen fitter or joiner.

In terms of thickness, expect to choose from between 27mm up to 42mm, although thicker options are available. The thicker the better in terms of appearance and performance, although thicker worktops will cost more.

The term 'staves' refers to the individual strips of timber that make up the worktop. These staves are glued together and come in various thicknesses, from 20mm up through 40mm and up to 70mm and beyond. Let personal preference be your guide, but some experts feel that the thinner staves are more prone to splitting



- 1. B&Q's 400mm-thick Cooke & Lewis Beech Solid Wood Square Edge Worktop costs £274 and measures 3m in length
- 2. This birch end grain timber worktop from Second Nature sits on top of their Milbourne Stone kitchen, is 60mm thick and costs from £420/m (per linear metre)
- 3. Second Nature's full stave oak worktop shown with birch end grain and granite reveals how materials can work in harmony. The oak worktop costs from £265/m
- **4.** This walnut end grain butchers' block is from Rencraft Kitchens. Expect to pay from £100-£200/m for similar
- 5. This oak worktop is from Bordercraft and costs from £200/m

Getting Creative

Rather than choosing timber as your only worktop material, consider mixing it up with other materials too. This is a great idea from both a practical and an aesthetic point of view. On the practical side, it allows you to use a material more able to deal with moisture and heat around the sink and hob (such as certain stones or composites). From an aesthetic angle,

> it looks great — defining the kitchen into separate visual areas and highlighting the beauty of each separate material used.

Where to Buy

You can opt to buy your worktop from the same company you are sourcing your kitchen from, but invariably this will cost more. If you are buying your worktop from a different company, you might find you need to arrange the fitting yourself, but this is a job very familiar to most carpenters and joiners.

A Creative Conversion

A former registry office in Newbury has been transformed into a modern family home by architect Kate Cooper, while retaining its period features



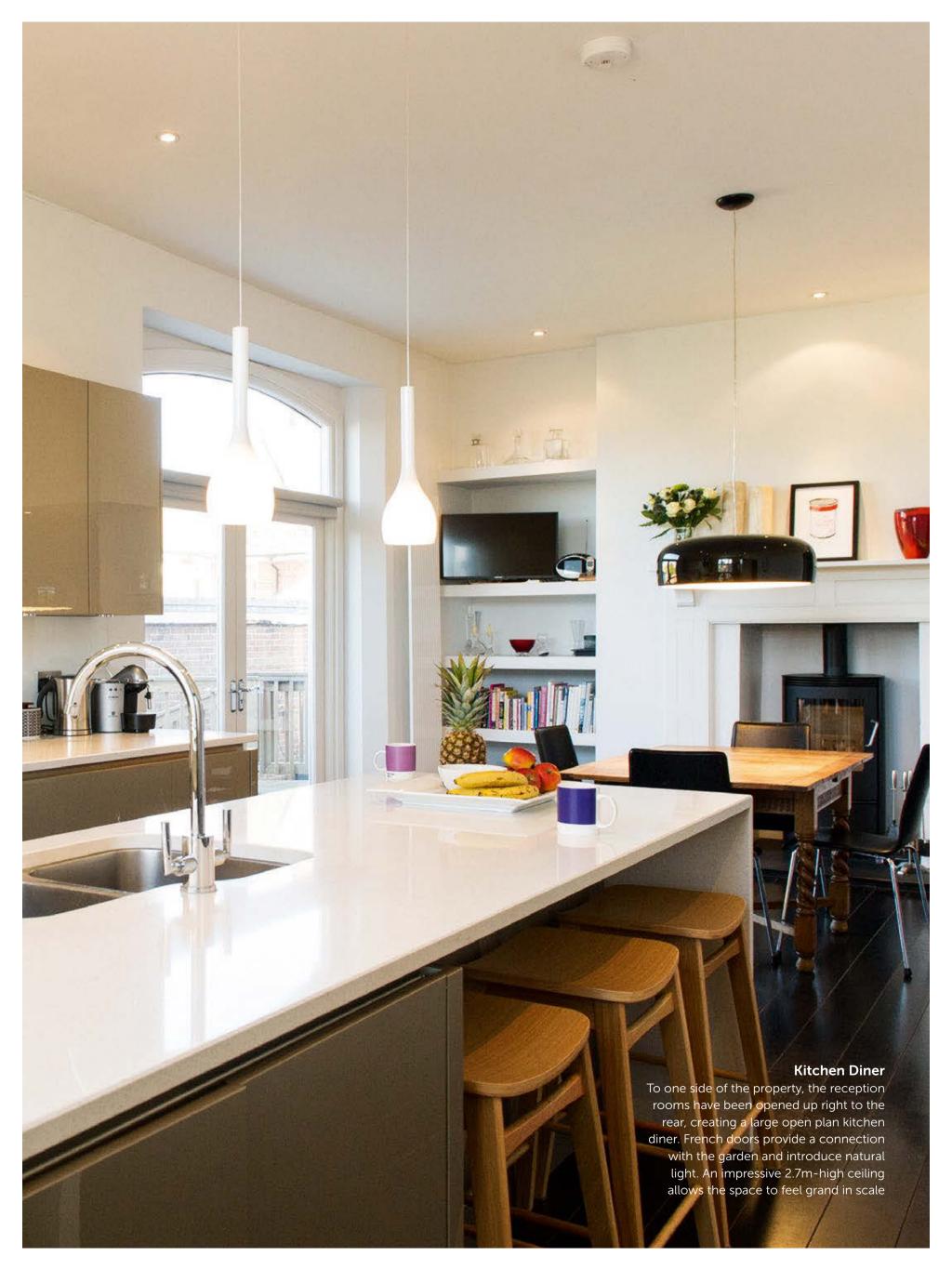


KATE COOPER Kate (left of shot – homeowner Claire is on the right) is the director of Absolute Architecture (absolute-architecture.co.uk)

HB&R: The property was originally built as a house in 1897 before becoming a registry office in 1949. What process did you go through to return it to its former use?

Kate Cooper: Being a home originally, the building lent itself to being transformed back to its former use. Over the years as a registry office, it had been gradually adapted, including the addition of a 1980s extension at the rear, and some of the period features had been hacked around. So, the key starting point was to sit back and envisage how the property would have looked initially, which involved taking down the dividing walls that had been added and emphasising the home's classic proportions. We gutted everything and pretty much started from scratch.

There was a classic floorplan to the home originally, with a central hallway and double-fronted reception rooms, and we wanted to retain this while also opening up part of the house to suit modernday open plan living. Opening up the rear, which housed the 1980s







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THE DESIGNER'S VIEW REGISTRY OFFICE REDESIGN



Below: Marrying Old with New

While the emphasis of the project was on retaining the home's classic features, a clean and crisp interior scheme provides a modern twist to the period home. Here, the fireplace in the dining space has been reinstated, while the new black flooring laid throughout helps to unify the whole ground floor

extension, allowed the plan to really work, yet we knew this would be the biggest challenge — integrating this space to become part of the house and not just look or feel like an add-on. It was all about creating that fine balance between reinstating the old proportions and opening up the spaces to suit modern living.

What state was the building in when you took it on?

It wasn't derelict, but it was unloved and hadn't been invested in for years. The reception rooms, where they used to hold the wedding ceremonies, had some rather nasty wallpaper and everything was very dark. There was a lot that needed replacing, including the electrics, plumbing and plastering, and we had to recondition the windows and fireplaces. However, the priority was to let in more light and keep the classic layout, with some minor tweaks.

How did the design process work? Did the clients have a lot of input?

The clients Claire and Jason had quite a good idea of their requirements and it really helped that Claire is a graphic designer, so she could really visualise how the end result was going to look. Even from the outset, we both looked at the house and had the confidence that we could make this work.

The couple came up with a brief and then had to make decisions about what could be done now and what could be done at a later date, due to their finite budget. There was a philosophy to tackle what needed doing first — prioritising different elements that required more immediate attention. We sat down and looked at different layout options, and ended up going with the more radical







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THE DESIGNER'S VIEW REGISTRY OFFICE REDESIGN



decision to open up the rear rooms. In order to connect the home to the garden, we also designed in the French doors, which open out to a raised deck area.

The project took about six months on site — all in all, it took a year from first plans to moving in. Thanks to the reduced VAT on the building for being a change of use, this offered the couple the opportunity to do more with their budget, which they wouldn't have got if they'd have gone for a different property.

Were there any issues with the planners?

Fortunately there were no planning issues, just a change of use. In the past there had been developers looking to turn the property into a block of flats, and so when people heard that we were planning to transform the building back into a home they were really happy.

How does the reconsidered floorplan work to meet the homeowners' requirements?

We looked at how we could incorporate a studio into the house for Claire. With a growing family, the design also needed to be flexible over time, so we chose to keep one of the large reception rooms, but this could always be divided up over time if need be. A big kitchen diner was one of the key requirements from the homeowners, and we also squeezed in two extra bathrooms to serve the family better, without impacting too much on the classic proportions — the ceiling heights on the ground floor measure 2.7m, which is quite grand for the area.

Being a former registry office, the building was of a certain significance. Was this a personal project for you, too?

It was quite a personal project — the building was very popular

Above: Master Bedroom

The large space with bay window was previously used as an office. In order to prioritise this bedroom, an en suite bathroom was located in an adjacent room

among the locals, who had many happy memories attached to it; even I was interviewed in there before I got married, so it was an enjoyable case to work on. The homeowners and I are good friends, and in terms of the local context, I used to live just 500 yards away so, like everyone, I was happy to see the integrity of the building kept and become a family home as opposed to a block of flats.

What makes the home so successful?

I think it's a very well proportioned house and, as with many period properties, it has the big beautiful sash windows to the front and a bay window at the back, along with classic details. We've managed to strike a balance between the modern and period features, and the consistent approach to the interiors, such as the black flooring throughout, really helps to unify the ground floor, which could otherwise have felt very 'bitty'.

How has the home improved the family's way of life?

The home has really served the family well as it enabled them to continue living in the area where their children go to school, and since moving in Claire has established her business and can now work from home and invite clients round. Jason is in the army and is often away, so the home also provides the family with a settled base — they're comfortable, and really enjoy living there. •

QUICK IDEAS

Quick Ideas for Feature Lighting

Lighting can make or break a room, turning it from cold and unwelcoming into cosy and warm — or vice versa. Natasha Brinsmead sheds a little light





LAYER UP

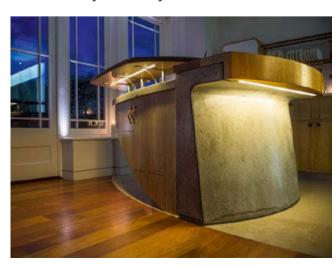
Building up 'layers' of lighting is a really effective and practical lighting solution. In this contemporary space, directional spotlights recessed into a false ceiling draw attention to an interesting architectural feature, while the space-age fixing hovering just below provides an overall glow and a central focal point. Well-positioned table and floor lamps serve to soften the look, drawing you towards the seating. (Image: Panbeton, try Holloways of Ludlow)

BE BOLD

The clue's in the title — feature lighting should not just serve a functional purpose but needs to be beautiful in its own right. Just one or two statement pieces — like this remarkable Pigalle pendant (above) — can do the trick and establish a real marker for the whole interior scheme. (Image: David Hunt Lighting)

DAYTO NIGHT

Once the cooking is over, most kitchens need to be capable of becoming cosy, sociable spaces — and a good lighting scheme is key to making this work. If you have a feature island in the kitchen, make sure all eyes are on it by fixing lighting to the underside of the worktops for a convivial glow and to bring out the beauty of the materials used to construct the island itself. (Image: Johnny Grey Studios)





KITCHEN LIGHTING

Feature lighting can serve to visually define the various spaces in a room. In this kitchen (below), under-cabinet lighting illuminates the practical, task-orientated worksurface, while recessed downlights within the curved timber beam run the length of the unusual island unit, turning it into a space to gather around. The high-level, ceiling-mounted angled striplight fixed just in front of the main worksurface also ensures a good level of background light that won't be blocked by whoever is working there. (Image: Johnny Grey Studios)



FOR SUPPLIER INFORMATION
See page 159 or visit homebuilding.co.uk/sourcebook



PENDANT POWER

Downlights are helpful where a soft glow is required and, when strategically placed, shed light where needed most. They work well in kitchens when used in conjunction with other types of lighting. But pendants are enjoying a major revival not just over islands and dining tables but as features in architectural spaces too, such as these from Fishpools (above) and the beautiful LED Empatia Sospensione from Artemede (top left).



WELL-LIT STAIRS

Don't neglect your staircase. Often built around awkward angles, it can be hard to light a staircase adequately using light from above. Install directional lights at floor level for a more well-distributed, helpful light — these can be set within the treads or walls either side of each tread. (Image: Bisca) $oldsymbol{\Theta}$

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Opening Out

Su and Jim Bonner's 1960s house has tripled in size thanks to an ultra-modern, light-filled extension and remodel that makes the most of their woodland plot

Words: Victoria Jenkins Photography: Jeremy Phillips



Right: Kitchen

The bespoke design features Mons white units by Ultima and Diespeker stone worktops. The gas hob, wok burner, teppanyaki plate and accessories are all by Gaggenau, and the boiling water tap is from Quooker. Engineered oiled oak wide-plank floorboards run throughout the open plan space. The copper pendant lights are the Light Years Orient Pendant P1 design from Nest.co.uk









Before: When the couple first bought the property in 1994, the house measured just 120m² and came with a neglected swimming pool, which they renovated while

the children were young



THE QUICK READ

- >>> Jim and Su Bonner have extended and extensively remodelled their 1960s timber and render-clad home on a half-acre woodland plot in Tunbridge Wells
- >>> The couple enlisted the services of architect Simon Skeffington, whose practice ArchitecturAll offers a design and build package — alleviating the stress of the project
- **>>>** As a result of choosing ArchitecturAll's complete package route, the project took just six months to finish on site and has tripled the footprint of the house





hen Jim and Su Bonner moved into their Arne Jacobsen-inspired 1960s home on a half-acre plot 20 years ago, they knew even back then that they would eventually double the house in size one day. "The location is perfect beside a lake in a semi-wooded area in Tunbridge Wells," says Jim, a bank director. "Although the top half of the house can be seen from the road, it does look much smaller from the front elevation — it's a kind of stealth house, as our architect likes to put it."

Although the arrangement of the 'upside-down' house (with the bedrooms downstairs) was very modern for its time, it was too small for the couple and their two children. "We just had three bedrooms, one bathroom and one lounge, so we were all on top of each other," says Jim. However, the couple did not want to disturb the children's lives with all the upheaval of building work and, in any case, did not have the funds available to carry out the works.

After their children had left home, Su and Jim were finally in a position to extend. Jim met architect Simon Skeffington through a work colleague and liked that both he and his builder Julian Cotet were directors of the same company, ArchitecturAll. "We liked his ethos — design and build all in one package. Simon convinced us that by going down this route we could do the project in a stress-free way," says Jim.

The Design Brief

"We had a very clear brief in mind when we started the project," says Jim. "We wanted five double bedrooms with no compromise

Above: Transformed Exterior

The front façade of the house has a low profile on the street, with a new bridge to the front door replacing an old timber one. The new rear extension has been built using a steel frame, clay blocks and insulated render partly clad in larch

on space, a garden, patio and – importantly – lots of light. The house originally had poor lighting and failed to make the most of the views, and so the brief was to come up with a design that made the most of the plot and fulfilled the house's potential." Following discussions with the Bonners, Simon drew up plans that more than doubled the size of the house, and within four months planning permission had been granted.

Extending the House

"We kept the original house but took the end off it and removed most of the interior walls," says Simon. "Then we built on the extension with a steel frame, clay blocks and insulated render." In order to improve soundproofing as well as thermal insulation, the walls and ceilings have been insulated with mineral felt to blot out noise, and Simon hung the ceilings with resilient bars. This means the ceiling is not fixed directly to the rafters above, but instead hangs separately and, therefore, reduces any noise or vibration from above filtering downstairs.







"The build process was excellent, to the point where we didn't get stressed at all!" says Jim. "ArchitecturAll offered a full service, even down to the decorating, and so we rented a house on the other side of the lake to ours. Within six months we moved back in and everything was done for us. We didn't need to get involved and there were no issues at all. Perhaps the one problem we had was the weather, as during the build we suffered from one of the wettest winters on record, but fortunately we still managed to move in on schedule — the only thing that was delayed was the landscaping, which was done after we'd moved in."

The building and landscaping took nine months, with Simon and Julian taking into account the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the surrounding trees — fortunately no trees had to be removed as a result of the build. Work began on site in October 2013 and the couple moved back into the house in April 2014.

The Finished Home

Replacing the timber bridge that led to the front door on the upper storey of the home on this sloping plot, a new glass and tiled bridge now offers a stylish entrance to the house while giving fantastic, unobstructed views of the relandscaped garden. The old

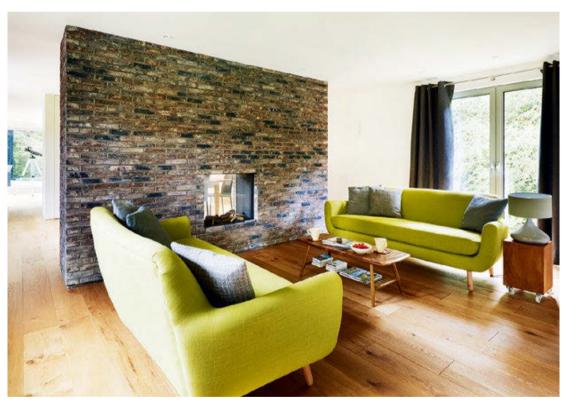
swimming pool on the plot has also been filled in to make way for the extension and the repositioned garage, which now sits at road level, complete with a gym/office underneath.

"The original house was timber clad on the top, and we had already rendered the lower floor. Besides the increase in footprint, the only thing that really changed externally was the roof, which was replaced with sharp grey tiles. The builders also levelled some of the ground for us so at last we can have a large lawn, 84m² patio for an outdoor entertainment area and a wonderful garden with lighting concealed within the shrubbery," says Jim.

Inside, the footprint has gone from 120m² to 450m² and the house now has the five double bedrooms the couple were after, including a master suite with its own bathroom, two en suite bedrooms, a family bathroom (it serves two bedrooms via a Jackand-Jill door arrangement) and a cloakroom. There are also three separate staircases — one of which is sited in such a way that, if needed, an end part of the house could be closed off to be used as a granny annexe.

The old dining room, kitchen and lounge have now become a big open plan living and dining room with a very contemporary grey brick fireplace as a room divider, enabling the couple to see right





Above: Feature Fireplace

The old dining room, kitchen and lounge have now become a big open plan living and dining room. A very contemporary double-sided Faber gas fire acts as a room divider, set in a grey brick fireplace. Both zones have underfloor heating and patio doors to the rear, with Juliet balconies

Left: Living Room

Leading off the new open plan kitchen, a triple-aspect living room with a full-height glazed corner window and patio doors leads out to a large terrace for outdoor entertainment — and provides access to the study

III) •



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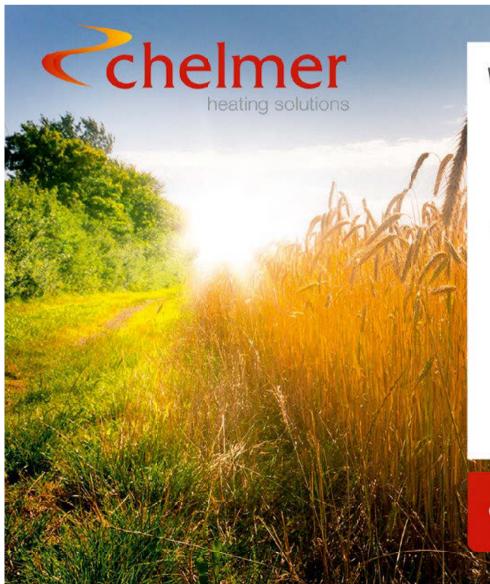
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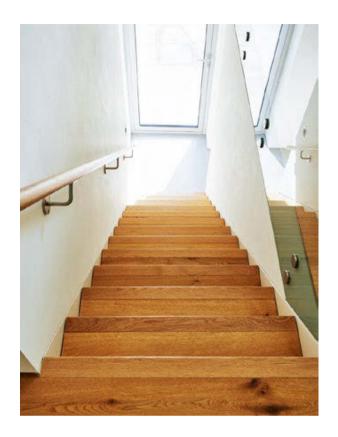
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Above Right and Right: Master Suite

The master bedroom in the new extension includes an en suite, a separate wetroom/shower and dressing area, and features a pure wool carpet designed for use with the underfloor heating. The en suite is divided into two areas: one with twin resin stone sinks, WC and a stone resin bath from Duravit, with taps and bath filler from Hansgrohe.

The other, a separate shower area, features a shower by Splash Direct with stone tiles by Mandarin Stone

across the house. The former main bedroom has now become their media room. Underfloor heating has also been laid in the extension beneath the oak flooring and new radiators in the original core because of the concrete slab floor, which was left as it seemed excessive digging it up to fit underfloor heating in just two rooms.

"Su and I perhaps over-spent on the fittings — some £50,000 on the kitchen and bath/shower rooms," says Jim. "We asked Simon to include lots of storage, and we also had a huge declutter and bought furniture that's more appropriate to the new design."

In order to bring natural light into the home, two suspended glass terraces have been introduced along with various walls of glass. Taking into account the wooded area, ArchitecturAll designed one of the frameless glass terraces to lead from the first floor sitting area and the other one from the kitchen so the couple can dine there while looking out over the treetops. "The first floor is some five metres above ground and it's fantastic to see the birds and the squirrels at eye level. "It's so relaxing as there's so much light coming in and, even though there are 200-foot views, there's enough privacy."

With the team completing the home on time and to the agreed price, Jim and Su are delighted with the end result. "I can't even get on with any gardening out the front because people are always slowing down to stop and talk about the house, and ask me about how the process went," says Jim. "We've even recommended the builders to people. It's a fabulous house to live in."



The Project

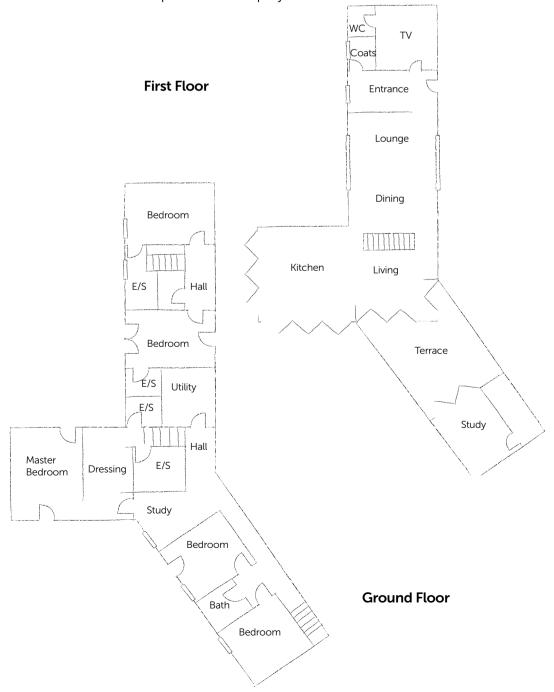


Jim and Su **Bonner** Homeowners

HOMEOWNERS' VIEW

The house is fantastic to live in and we love the kitchen/ living space with its balconies and treetop views. There's so much natural light - you feel as though you are in among the trees, spotting birds, badgers and deer from above. It's just brilliant and I don't think we will ever grow tired of it.

We would recommend doing your research on your builder and architect and get references first. If they are good at what they do, then the build process can be fun and enjoyable, as ours was. If not, then the stress may spoil the whole project.

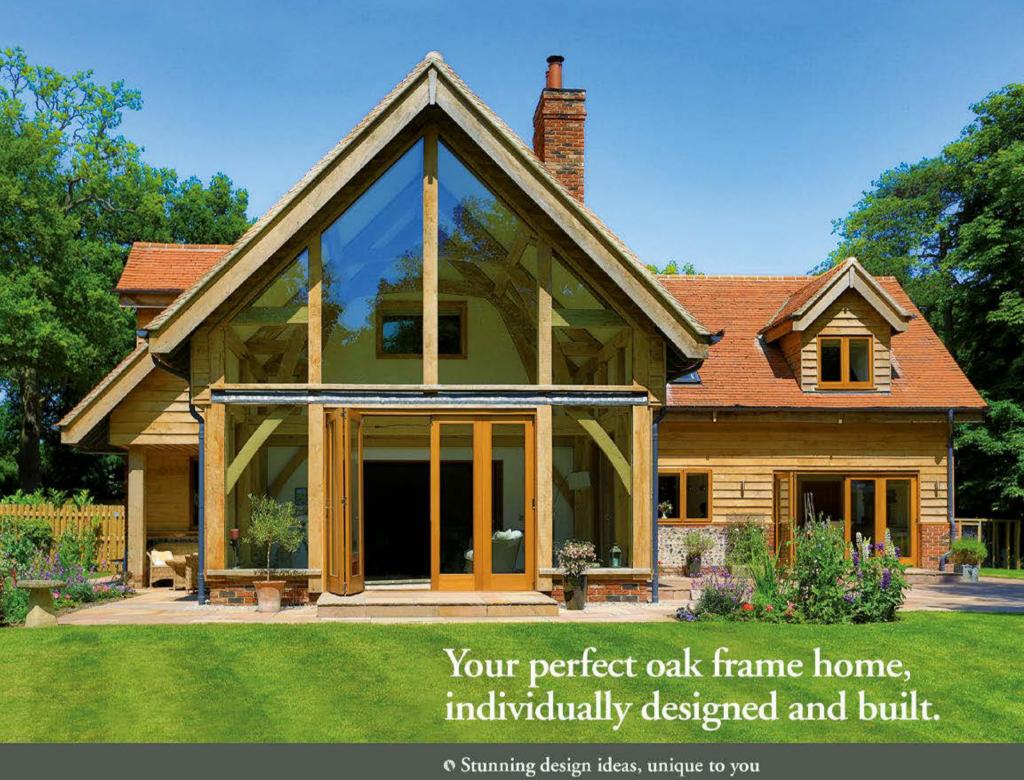


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Design and build Including:	£450,000
Kitchen	£15,000
Bathrooms	£28,000
Flooring and staircases	£19,500
Carpentry and glazing	£29,000
Furniture and furnishings	£15,000
Appliances	£30,000
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INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

Ideas for Every Room

In this cut-out-and-keep gallery, Natasha Brinsmead offers the best spatial design ideas for all the elements of your new home

THE HALLWAY



ARROW & BAI

The Cohesive Space

Pulling spaces together can help overcome disjointed layouts or a warren of smaller rooms — a common problem in many period homes. Tie your interiors together using materials that mirror one another, such as here, where painted flooring and varying shades of grey/blue link the spaces.





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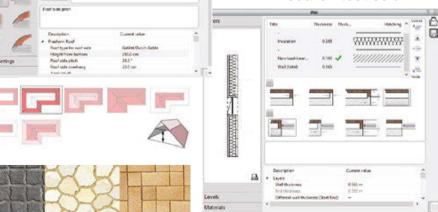








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THE KITCHEN



DARREN CHUNG

The Eclectic Approach

The kitchen as the heart of the home is not a new concept, but designing a space which works on both a practical and sociable level - bringing together rooms, such as the study, library, kitchen and the dining space, in a way that just works - is something of an art. The raw materials used here, combining concrete and timber in a multitude of forms, reflect the very practical beauty of this space.



Essential Tips
For Great Paving

Below: New for 2015, the Brett Varano range of flag paving comes in polished, textured and striped variants

If you are planning a garden project this summer, a high-quality patio or driveway is just the thing to add style and elegance to your outdoor space

Follow these six essential tips to navigate the options and achieve the very best results for your project:

Right: Mix Brett Alpha TRIO pavers in Autumn Gold with Aura Burnt Fleck edging to create an inviting approach

Start researching early. Not only are the best installers very popular (with suitably full diaries), it will also give you time to think about preferred materials, colours and textures.

Think of long-term value and don't skimp on materials. The cost of the paving itself will typically be less than 20 per cent of the full installed cost, so the difference between 'cheap' and 'expensive' paving could be less than you might think.

Remember that products in brochures or websites can look different in reality. Always ask to see samples and – if appropriate – view a similar project laid using the same material before buying.

Obtain several quotations to compare different paving contractors, but remember that the cheapest isn't always best — ask yourself why it's the cheapest. Request photos of the contractors' work,

determine how long the job should take, and check that there are no hidden extras such as skip hire or soil removal.

Use a contractor that is registered with an accredited installer scheme. Most reputable schemes have websites listing members.

Request product and workmanship guarantees. Quality contractors can offer you added peace of mind with guarantees on their workmanship. Members of the highly rated Brett Approved Installer (BAI) scheme, for example, offer a five-year installation guarantee as well as a manufacturer-backed 10-year product guarantee.

Located around the UK, BAIs offer the extensive Brett Landscaping range of high-quality landscaping solutions to create great-looking driveways, natural-stone patios and concrete garden paving. For more details, visit brettpaving. co.uk, call 0845 608 0577, or visit Brett at the Homebuilding & Renovating Show at ExCel, London, between 25 and 27 September.

Below: This natural stone patio uses Brett Elite Textured Stone in Midnight Storm, with Smart Limestone Mystic Sky edging







THE DINING SPACE



JEREMY PI

The Quiet Double-Height Area Large, airy and impressive — double-height spaces certainly make a visual impact.

Large, airy and impressive — double-height spaces certainly make a visual impact.

Unfortunately they can also be echoing, cold and cavernous. Here, the first floor has been soundproofed using slatted cedar cladding fixed over a thick black fabric. Also, the warmth of the cedar breaks up the expanse of white wall and adds character too.

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The Open Plan En Suite That Actually Works The open plan en suite presents a few issues for many people — privacy, noise transference

The open plan en suite presents a few issues for many people — privacy, noise transference and other unmentionables. But well designed, this can be a set up that works. Here, the statement bath remains in the bedroom area, while the WC is tucked away behind a series of partition walls, including the curved walk-in shower enclosure.

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Advice

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PLOTS & PLANNING

Barns: Planning Freefor-All'Turns Sour

New rules designed to help more people convert barns without needing planning permission have proved a false dawn, says Sally Tagg



SALLY TAGG
Planning consultant Sally Tagg
(foxleytaggplanning.co.uk) specialises
in self-build issues and advises the
DCLG and local authorities on policy

hen the Government introduced changes to the planning system in April 2014 to make it easier for people to convert barns into dwellings, it created a lot of hope (mainly for farmers) and hype (from locals worried

about the effect on our rural environment). There would, it was claimed, be a 'free-for-all', enabling any old barn to be turned into a new house, with local authorities powerless to act. Yet, recent statistics show that in the three months after the rule was introduced, 800 applications were made and just over 50 per cent were refused.

So a reasonable question, therefore, would be to ask how a local authority can refuse an application under the new liberal regime. The answer is in how the legislation was introduced. Simply put, the rule, in theory, allows the conversion of an agricultural building into a maximum of three individual dwellings provided that the proposal can adhere to various conditions. The problem is that unlike Permitted Development rights which set strict guidance, for example, on the size of extensions allowable without needing planning permission, the barn conversion system is actually a form of 'prior approval', which introduces a degree of subjectivity into the consideration.

The key parts of the prior approval process require the local authority to consider the: 'Transport, highways and noise impacts

of the development, and also the flooding and contamination risks on the site, and whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to dwelling house.' These arguments are little different to those posed in a full planning application and hence prior approval may be better con-

The problem with prior approval is the uncertainty

sidered as a form of "planning lite" rather than an extension to Permitted Development.

The main issue is that the limited phraseology of the legislation can be interpreted in a number of ways by each of the 300 plus local authorities. Many schemes have already been refused on grounds that the proposal would be 'impractical or undesirable' — subjective in the extreme. For example, local authorities have refused schemes based on the sustainability of the site, e.g. sites are located away from settlements in rural areas with limited access to services — surely not a huge surprise for a barn!

Not to be defeated, the Government have now introduced additional guidance which narrows the scope for interpretation, hopefully leading to more positive results. In relation to whether a scheme would be 'impractical or undesirable' the new guidance now establishes that: 'Impractical reflects that the location and siting would "not be sensible or realistic", and undesirable reflects that it would be "harmful or objectionable".' Still not totally clear-cut, but certainly an improvement.

In this context it is likely that a barn located on top of a hill with no road access would be considered to be impractical, and likewise a barn next to other farm uses would be considered to be undesirable. However, the new guidance does stipulate that there should be no test for sustainability, thus reflecting the fact that barns are usually located away from services and facilities and therefore should not be refused on such a basis.

Another area where the new guidance adds clarity is in respect to the extent of the works that can be undertaken. The guidance specifies that installing or replacing windows, doors, roofs, exterior walls, water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services are acceptable if they are reasonable and necessary for the conversion. However, such new works should not include any structural elements and therefore the existing building must be, 'structurally strong enough to take the loading which comes with the external works' — bad news for some Dutch barns.

Let's be clear — the initial legislation has, in many cases, proved to be a false dawn. It's also clear, however, that the new guidance will provide far less scope for a local authority to refuse a well thought-out scheme — which should encourage those previously refused to apply again in the context of the new guidance. Less hype, and more hope perhaps. •



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INSIGHT BLOCKWORK

The Best Ways to Build in Blockwork

The traditional cavity masonry wall accounts for the vast majority of UK builds. Mark Brinkley explains how best to use it and recent innovations

THE QUICK READ

>>> Concrete masonry walls have been the dominant form of wall construction in the UK since the 1930s

Issues today involve the width of the cavity itself, how much it is filled with insulation and how it is built to avoid penetrating water across wall ties and above windows and doors

>>> Innovations such as Porotherm, thin-joint and aircrete are slowly transforming the way we build block walls



MARK BRINKLEY Mark is the author of The Housebuilder's Bible and an experienced builder; he's just bought another plot

addressed the issue of damp - one of the main failings of the solid brick wall, because the cavity provides a line of defence against all manner of water penetration.

In a cavity wall, the load-bearing is taken care of by the utilitarian concrete blocks used on the inner skin, while the outer skin brick or stonework just has to keep the weather at bay. You can tell very easily whether a brick wall is solid or cavity work by the pattern of the bricks used. Stretcher bond, where you see only the long face of the brick, was almost un-

known before the 1920s but is now almost ubiquitous.

n the excitement over new ways of building that we often seem to read about, it's easy to overlook the fact that one form of construction dominates the housebuilding market in the UK, both for professionals and self-builders. It's known variously as traditional construction, masonry build or brick and block.

None of these terms quite do justice to this phenomenally successful form of building which, it turns out, is far from traditional. Its historical roots lie in the use of brick to build external walls which goes back to the rebuilding of much of London after the Great Fire in 1666. Before that, most homes had been built using timber.

Solid wall brick construction became the backbone of building in the Georgian and Victorian eras, although stone was often used instead in areas where there were good local quarries. The cavity wall, one of the key features of contemporary masonry construction, didn't appear until late Victorian times and didn't become commonplace until the 1920s.

So why the change? The short answer is that the arrival of the mass-produced concrete block made it cheaper and quicker to split the external wall into an inner and outer skin so that the amount of relatively expensive brick or stonework required was halved. It also

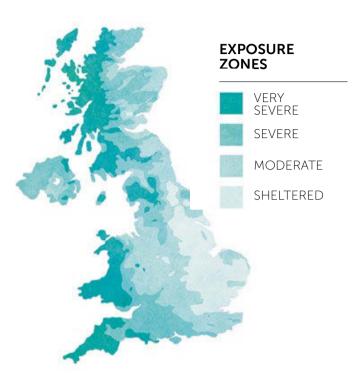
Cavity Issues

The cavity wall may have become the predominant form of construction in the UK but the cavity itself is not universally loved. It's very simple for architects to draw and detail a cavity wall design, but it's much harder to build well and, as the cavity itself gets closed in, there is ample room for mistakes to be made during the construction phase. One of the elements that causes problems is the placing of the wall ties, required to stitch the inner and outer skins together structurally. These ties can get bent out of shape, they can rust and they can also collect mortar droppings, known delightfully in the trade as 'snots', which act as a pathway for rainwater to cross the cavity and get into the blockwork.

There has always been an assumption that water will find its way across the cavity and that there may be residual water trapped inside the cavity. Consequently, whenever the cavity is breached, typically where windows or doors are fitted, the opening above has to be made watertight so that any water

> trapped in the cavity is directed outside. Most builders deal with this issue by using steel lintels with in-built cavity trays, but there are details such as roof abutments where more intricate detailing is required. In fact, a substantial industry providing solutions to the problems of water ingress into cavities (cavity trays and weep holes) has developed.

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Driving Rain

This map highlighting 'UK zones for exposure to driving rain' is used to determine suitability for full-fill cavity wall insulation. As you can see, west-facing walls in western areas are most prone





MIENERBERGER X2

Blockwork in 2015

Blocks may look similar now to the way they did years ago, but the choice is enormous — in particular between aircrete (with its better insulating properties and lighter working loads — it can also be cut easier) and denser blocks, used mainly now below ground and for additional load-bearing requirements. Wienerberger's Porotherm clay block (top right) is a recent innovation, with an interlocking system meaning no mortar is required on the vertical joint



INSIGHT BLOCKWORK

Insulation

The cavity story gets even more complicated by the more recent innovation — well this one is a mere 30 years old! — of placing insulation inside it to beef up the thermal performance of masonry-built homes. Whereas the alternative building systems invariably set out to provide excellent insulation levels, cavity wall work has struggled to come to terms with the conflicting aims of keeping rainwater out and heat in.

Yet over time, both the designs and the standards have improved and there are now well-worked routines for how you should build cavity walls. The Building Regulations split the nation into four climate zones, each with its own risk profile and each with its own prescriptions of how insulated cavity walls should be built (left). And paradoxically, the move to pack more insulation into cavities has resulted in much wider cavities which seem to be less prone to water penetration.

However, this has contributed to another issue for masonry builders — the width of the wall. On larger homes, this is not critical, but on smaller houses the area taken up by external walls can have a significant effect on room sizes. Framed construction systems in particular can be used in conjunction with lightweight rainscreens such as timber or tile and achieve the required U value in less than 300mm width where conventional masonry cavity work is struggling to do this in 400mm.

Despite all these many issues, cavity wall work remains by far the most common method throughout the UK, with the exception of Scotland which embraces timber frame. Although cavity-based masonry work can be relatively slow, is liable to weather disruption and can be prone to error, it is also the best understood system and the most readily available. Every builder is familiar with the cavity wall and every builders' merchant stocks all the materials required to build one. It's also a forgiving system: if the foundations are not quite as true as they should be, good bricklayers can sort out any issues within their first few courses. And blockwork is equally at home with extensions as it is with new build — another area where factory-built systems can struggle to cope with.

Thin-Joint

Despite many people predicting the "end of the cavity", it's actually proven to be a remarkably resilient form of construction. However, there are innovations happening in the world of masonry builds which involve speeding up the block-laying process and narrowing the wall profile. These are known collectively as thin-joint systems which, ironically, turn the clock back to the pre-cavity days when external walls were solid.

Thin-joint block laying does away with the conventional 10mm bed of cement mortar and replaces it with a 2-3mm glue mortar bed, similar in characteristics to tile adhesive. It sets very rapidly and thus enables blocklayers to use much larger blocks and to build them into walls much faster. The larger the project, the bigger the labour savings from employing thin-joint methods, and when used wisely, it brings with it many of the speed benefits of off-site construction methods.

The big manufacturers all offer thin-joint solutions in aircrete, the familiar material used by blocklayers throughout the UK. But there is also a move to use honeycomb clay block-

work. It's extremely common on the Continent but has rarely been used in the UK till recently. It shares some of the benefits of other thin-joint systems in that it is quick to lay and to get up to storey height in a day. But additionally it promises better insulation performance because of the honeycomb structure of the blocks. With the backing of Wienerberger, the world's largest brick manufacturer, Porotherm clay blocks are slowly making inroads into the conservative block market, marketed not just on speed but also on sustainability grounds.

Thin-joint solutions are not new: Tarmac Durox's thin-joint system has been available in the UK since the 1990s. While great things were predicted for thin-joint masonry, the switch to new forms of construction nosedived during the building slump following the 2008 financial crash and traditional blockwork came back into the ascendency. Interest in all novel construction forms seems to rise and fall with the larger economic cycle and now that the building business is picking up again, we are seeing labour rates rise. Once again, masonry builders are looking at ways of reducing labour times spent on site and interest in thin-joint work is set to rise again. For the time being though, something like 95 per cent of masonry work is still conventional cavity work.

The Future

The two main drivers behind the quest for new walling methods are the need to reduce labour costs on site and the need to meet higher building standards, especially as regards thermal insulation levels. The traditional builders have responded to both challenges largely by slow adaptation rather than introducing wholesale changes and this possibly suits a British housebuilding industry that is more interested in building cheaply, rather than well or quickly.

Consequently, the cavity wall will be with us for some time yet and it seems quite capable of adapting to step-changes in insulation standards that lie ahead. Small changes such as switching to better wall ties or more refined detailing around window and door openings may end up being more significant than entirely new methods. And perhaps this suits a construction industry that is based around casual work gangs with a limited skill base.

Whereas countries like Japan are able to bring forward off-site construction with houses built by robots, we in Britain are deeply wedded to craft-based building and the cavity wall is therefore something to be cherished — not discarded in the name of progress. For while it seems in many ways an illogical and outmoded way of building homes, it is also a routine which almost all of our established builders are familiar with and needs very little in the way of specialised knowledge.

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PROJECTS

Building Regs: What You Need to Know

Almost all building projects need Building Regulations approval (whether they need planning approval or not). David Snell provides a guide for first-timers



DAVID SNELL A 13-time self-builder, David has been building homes for 50 years and is the author of Building Your Own Home

lanning permission is largely subjective and governs whether you can build at all and, if so, what your new home will look like. Building Regulations (Building Warrant in Scotland) are, on the other hand, largely objective and confine themselves to the structural aspects of the build, by reference to the regulations themselves. An application for Building Regulations either conforms to those regulations and is approved, or fails to conform and is rejected, although there is room for pragmatism and inspectors do have the power to negotiate a relaxation in certain circumstances.

Who Administers the Regulations?

Building Regulations approval can be granted by either your local authority building control (LABC) department or any private company acting as an Approved Inspector. Around 20 per cent of all approvals are now handled privately, without recourse to the local authority.

When is Approval Required?

You will require Building Regulations approval if you intend to carry out any new structural work or alteration to your home. Additionally, work involving drainage, heat-producing appliances, cavity wall insulation and electrics requires approval — although in some of these cases,

'competent persons' can self-certify their works for compliance (e.g. under Part P for electrical work).

When is Approval not Required?

You do not need Building Regulations approval for most minor works, particularly where like-for-like replacements are

taining sleeping accommodation (check with your local authority for a full list) – are also exempt. As a general rule, structural work as well as anything to do with electrics and drainage needs building control approval; most other works don't. If in doubt, check with the local authority before starting work.

used. Certain small buildings - i.e. conservatories not con-

The Application Process

An application has to be accompanied by the relevant fees (currently £533 plus VAT for new dwellings, less for most extensions) covering both the application and the eventual inspections. Most local authorities offer fee calculators on their websites. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, once an application is lodged, work can commence on site within 48 hours — that is not possible in Scotland however.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland it is also possible, in the case of certain minor works, to proceed on what is known as a Building Notice (meaning works are inspected without needing subsequent plans approved). In general, the forms are quite complicated and must be accompanied by detailed drawings, calculations and specifications, which can often only be provided by professionals in possession of the right or relevant software.

The Inspection Process

Although work on a new build or extension may proceed before any formal approval, nothing can proceed beyond the inspection stages without the approval of the inspector, and those inspection stages are: excavations for foundations; foundation concrete; oversite; damp-proof course; foul water drains trenches open; surface water drains trenches open; occupation prior to completion (second fix); and completion.

Completion Certificate

When the building is completed to the satisfaction of the inspector, a Completion Certificate will be issued. This is a vital document that must be retained alongside the written planning permission for use if you ever want to sell. It is also required in order to release final funds from lenders, obtain the warranty certification and in order to reclaim VAT (if applicable).

Around 20 per cent of all approvals are now handled privately

PROJECT PLANNER SELF-BUILD STEP-BY-STEP

Self-build Project Planner

However you're getting it built, you'll need to know how a house is constructed. Here it is, week-by-week — along with a checklist of things not to forget

SIX WEEKS PRIOR

- ⇒→ Obtain quotations from service suppliers, pay them and book them
- **>>>** Organise warranty
- → Arrange site insurance
- **>>>** Inform all prospective

tradespeople of your schedule

- >>> Construct lockable insulated box and fix water standpipe
- → Check lead-in times

for main orders

- → Identify plant providers
- **>>>** Identify tipping facilities
- Advise building control and warranty inspectors of commencement
- ⇒ Ensure electricity and water is on site (usually arranged months in advance)



PREPARE SITE

⇒ Groundworkers create site access

>> Clear site

and strip vegetable soil; stacking material to be retained out of the way

- ⇒ Set up site hut and equip with drawings and safety equipment
- **>>→** Set up toilet
- ⇒ Secure lock-up/lorry container (hired in or purchased) to be positioned
- ⇒ Water board to bring supply to stopcock on boundary
- ➡ Plumber to connect water standpipe
- ⇒→ Surveyor marks out building on cleared site and transfers the lines to profiles well clear of any construction work
- ⇒ Bring in bricks and blocks and stack clear of future construction
- ⇒→ Set up mixer station close to cement store and sand heap



FOUNDATIONS/ OVERSITE

- → Groundworkers excavate foundations
- **■→** Wait for approval

of building control and warranty inspectors

→ Position any reinforcement bars, mesh or cages in the trenches

Position any compressible material or slip membranes required within the trenches

- → Lay ducts for services to enter through the foundations
- Arrange foot scaffold if necessary and shutter for any steps in the foundations
- → Pour concrete footings and tamp to level
- → Obtain approval from building/ warranty inspectors to proceed
- ⇒ Bricklayers build up foundation blockwork to damp-proof course
- **>> Install cranked air vents**
- ➡ Install drainage exit lintels
- ⇒ Fill cavities with lean-mix concrete to level with external ground level
- ⇒ Bed and lay damp-proof courses, linking these with any Radon membranes or barriers



START SUPER-STRUCTURE

⇒ Groundworkers to dig service trenches and lay pipes and

ducts to proposed stopcock/meter positions

⇒ Load out concrete floor beams to each bay and position

- → Install drainage and vent pipes, proud of the oversite
- pipes, proud of the oversite

 → Infill floor beams with blocks
- → Lay coursing blocks and position ventilator grilles
- **■→** Brush grout
- ⇒ Arrange for building control/ warranty inspection
- **>>** Commence building superstructure
- >> Install templates for future windows and doors, etc.
- >>> First lift of scaffolding required



SUPERSTRUCTURE

⇒ Bricklayers continue superstructure brickwork and blockwork

including work on any chimneys

- **⇒→ Install and bed lintels** including fireplace lintels
- >> Install flue liners as work proceeds
- >>> Build in meter boxes for gas and electricity
- ⇒ Electrician to install temporary consumer unit within electricity meter box
- **>>→** Service suppliers to carry out their work to the boundary
- → Plumber to reroute water supply to stopcock position
- **⇒→** Electricity providers to install meter and connect
- ⇒ Second scaffolding lift required
- Arrange crane to lift first floor beams onto each bay and position
- ➡ Position plasterboard batten clips
- Lay infill blocks



SUPER-STRUCTURE

- ⇒ Continue building superstructure to wallplate level
- ⇒ Third and then fourth lift of scaffolding required
- → Wallplate to be scarfed, bedded and tied down with proprietary wallplate straps
- >> Warranty inspection sometimes required
- Trusses as templates
- The Continue building up gable ends and chimney
- → Additional lifts of scaffolding required at the gable ends
- **→** Plumber to fit lead flashings, trays and skirts to chimney
- ⇒ Plumber to install vent pipes and flashing skirts as they come through the roof
- **>>→** Bricklayers to top out and fit chimney pot
- ➡ Bricklayers to point chimney flashings



CONSTRUCT ROOF

Carpenters to sling roof trusses, and

trusses to be fixed down to wallplate

→ All binders and bracing to be fixed at node points

- **>>>** Dormers to be constructed at this point
- **▶→** Fascia and soffit to be fixed together with any necessary ventilation grilles or strips
- ■→ Warranty inspection sometimes required
- **>>>** Any roof tanks must be installed at this point



ROOF COVERING

begin to cut and lav

undercloaking to the verges

- » Roofers to felt and batten
- **>>>** Tiles/slates to be laid
- **>>>** Ridge/hip tiles to be laid and bedded
- >>> Valley tiles to be laid, or fibreglass or lead valleys to be laid
- » Plumber to dress down flashings and skirtings
- facias, soffits and barges



EXTERIOR & INTERIOR **FITTINGS**

→ Plumbers to fix guttering

>>> Window suppliers to fit external joinery

- → Plasterers to carry out any external rendering
- **■→** Scaffolding to come down
- → Plumbers to fit downpipes and connect to drainage upstands/gullies
- **External decoration**
- first fix by fitting door linings, building any studwork partitioning and fixing window boards
- **>>>** Carpenters to fix plasterboard noggings and box in vent pipes
- >>> Plumber and carpenter to liaise with building of any necessary stands in roof
- **>>>** Carpenter to fix loft trap



FIRST FIX

→ Plumbers to lay flooring membrane and insulation,

taping all joints and sealing up to the damp-proof course

- → Underfloor heating (UFH) loops to be laid and fixed
- → All first fix plumbing for hot and cold and waste within floor zones to be laid
- >> Internal gas pipework installed
- ⇒ UFH pipework to be brought to manifolds and outlet positions
- Supply and fix company to pump in and lay level floor screed and leave for three days
- → Protective hardboard/ cardboard to be laid on screed
- **■→ Electrician to fix carcass wiring** for lighting and power circuits together with all backplates
- to be positioned
- ⇒ Wiring taken to external lighting points
- → TV aerial/satellite cables to be installed to required positions
- **>>>** Internal telephone wiring to be installed to required positions
- → Home entertainment/smart systems/alarms to be carcassed



DRAINAGE/ EXTERNAL

→ Groundworkers to begin digging

the trenches for drainage runs

- Trenches backfilled to 150mm with pea shingle
- ⇒ Drains laid to required falls
- **>>>** Brick/concrete section manholes constructed, or purpose-made manholes, rodding eyes and gullies set in runs
- → Building inspector to approve laid drains
- **■→** Drains haunched over with pea shingle
- → Drainage trenches backfilled
- **>>>** Work to connect to main sewer in road to be carried out by approved contractors
- Carpenter to finish boxings and noggings ready for plasterer
- Groundworkers to commence driveways and pathways
- ➡ Bricklayer to build any fireplaces and hearths **■→** Gas meter to be installed
- and connected → Plumbers and electricians to liaise on all cross bonding and earthing

CEILINGS/ DRY LINING

to be fitted by the carpenter

and protectively covered

- Dryliners/plasterers tack ceilings
- → All external and blockwork walls lined with plasterboard on dots and dabs
- → All studwork walls and pipe boxings tacked with plasterboard
- » All joints and angles filled and scrim taped
- **>>>** All abutments of differential materials jointed with mesh
- → All joinery to be sealed internally and externally with mastic
- **>>>** Dryliners/plasterers to skim coat all walls and ceilings
- → Decorator to paint/treat backs of all skirting and architraves
- **>>>** All roofing insulation to be installed



SECOND FIX CARPENTRY

- internal doors
- **■→ Skirting and**

architrave to be fitted by carpenters

- Bottom tread of staircase to be fitted. balustrading and handrails to be fitted, as well as linen cupboard shelving
- >>> Final fit of loft trap door and ladder
- Timber floors to be laid by carpenters or specialists and protected
- Ceramic floor tiles to be laid by specialist tilers and protected
- >> Carpenters/specialist suppliers to fit/build built-in bedroom and bathroom furniture
- Kitchen units to be fitted



SECOND FIX

- → All wiring connected
- to consumer unit
- **≫→** Boiler to be positioned,

plumbed and then wired in

- ⇒ Sink units to be plumbed in, earthed and cross bonded
- >> All sanitaryware to be fitted and plumbed in
- → Radiators and towel rails to be fitted and plumbed in
- → Underfloor heating loops to be connected to manifolds
- Electrician to check cross bonding and earthing to all sanitaryware, sinks, radiators, etc.
- ⇒ Boiler to be wired in; control systems and room thermostats to be wired in
- → Plumber and electrician to attend firing up and commissioning of boiler
- → All pipework and connections to be flushed through and pressure tested
- Central heating to be left on 'test'

PROJECT PLANNER SELF-BUILD STEP-BY-STEP

21-23

DECORATING

⇒ Worktops, made from the previously taken templates, to be fitted

→ House to be thoroughly cleaned with all debris and dust removed to outside

- ⇒ Decorators to snag any holes, blemishes or rough patches on walls, making good
- ⇒ Internal timber to be sanded smooth or rubbed down with wire wool
- ⇒ Decorators to paint all walls and ceilings, mist plus two coats of emulsion
- ⇒ Internal timber to be knotted, painted, primed, undercoated and top coat glazed, or internal timber to be two-coat stained
- ⇒ Specialist tilers to fix ceramic wall tiles to kitchen and utility rooms
- ⇒ Baths to be filled, in order to settle, before tilers fix any wall/splashback tiles



LANDSCAPING

⇒ Groundworkers or landscape gardeners to level the

ground and prepare

Topsoil from storage to be placed where required, with extra shipped if necessary

- ⇒→ Site hut to be removed or re-sited if intended for use as a garden shed
- **⇒** Secure site storage to be sold off or returned to hirers
- → Groundworkers to complete driveway surface
- → Patio slabs to be laid
- ⇒ Bricklayers to build any required dwarf/decorative walling
- ⇒ Lawned areas to be levelled ready for seeding or turfed
- ⇒ Approved contractors to complete any bellmouth and kerbing to road
- **>>>** Telephone company to connect
- → Contractors to install TV aerials and/or satellite dishes
- → All trades return for any snags



COMPLETION

- >>> Whole house to be thoroughly cleaned out
- **■→ All windows**

polished and all labels removed from glass and appliances

- → All polystyrene packing to be removed from cookers
- All stabilising bolts to be removed from washing machines/driers
- ⇒→ Site toilet and any remaining plant on hire to be off-hired
- » Readings to be taken on all meters
- >>> Central heating switched to 'run'
- ⇒ Local authority to be advised of completion to arrange for Council Tax valuation
- ➤ Energy Performance Certificate to be prepared and sent to building control
- **>>>** Building control final inspection and issuing of Completion Certificate
- → Warranty inspectors final inspection and issuing of warranty
- **⇒** Arrange protective covering for floor surfaces prior to delivery of furniture
- ⇒→ Switch self-build site insurance policy to homeowners' policy **①**

A Self-builder's Checklist

Things to make sure you do — before and after you start

- Ensure that planning permission has been obtained prior to commencement of works
- Do not arrange to start work until all conditions within the consent have been discharged
- Do not start work until/ unless a Building Regulations application has been lodged
- Send off for quotations for services and utilities as soon as possible
- When you get the quotations, accept them and agree a timescale for their work
- If you can't get mains water in time, arrange a hosepipe with a neighbour or hire a bowser
- Organise hire of any plant, lock-ups and toilets
- Create accounts with local builders' merchants and readymixed concrete suppliers
- Check lead-in times for materials and add them to your project planning
- Theck availability of chosen trades/builders and plan your project accordingly

- Arrange self-build site insurance
- Arrange warranty providers
- Send in notice of commencement of work to building control and warranty providers
- Ascertain where and how spoil will be disposed of
- Identify plant hire outlets, including concrete pumps
- ⇒→ Be aware that reinforcement may be required in the foundations. Mesh and bar are easily obtainable but madeup cages will have a lead-in time
- Plan where materials will be stored on site
- >>> Set up the mixer station in a position where it can be replenished with sand and cement
- Order the floor beams well in advance
- Arrange the scaffolders in good time
- Start to choose second fix items and kitchens etc. by at least week 11
- Finalise electrical outlet positions etc. by at least week 13
- Identify and commission an approved contractor for any

- work within the Highway
- >>> Don't forget that board or trestle scaffolding will be needed internally by the plasterers
- Run central heating on a low 'test' setting when installed
- ⇒ Don't let the painters and decorators start or continue work in a dirty house — clean it thoroughly beforehand
- Badger all trades to get back before completion to snag their work and hold final payment until they do
- Off-hire plant and toilets as soon as practicable
- ** Your last tranche of mortgage money will depend on the provision of an Energy Performance Certificate, a Completion Certificate from building control and a Warranty Certificate from the providers
- Take meter readings before moving in and switch central heating to 'run' when moving in
- ➡ Inform your local authority when you move in and arrange for a Council Tax valuation



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Felt

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last 30 years. Most hot flame installations are better than legacy systems CONS: Damaged easily and is the least attractive option COST: £40-£50/m² (installed)



GRP

PROS: GRP (glassreinforced plastic) can be expected to last around 25-30 years, looks better than felt and is durable

CONS: GRP is more expensive than both felt and single ply, and condensation can be an issue as it's not very breathable COST: £90/m² (installed)

Metal

PROS: Looks great and is highly durable, with some installations lasting 100+ years



CONS: Expensive and

highly variable pricing — lead, for example, is very expensive at present, requires a small pitch and can attract thieves COST: Budget £100/m² (plus installation)



Green

PROS: Visually very attractive CONS: Requires a special roof build-up COST: £100/m² but varies hugely on specification





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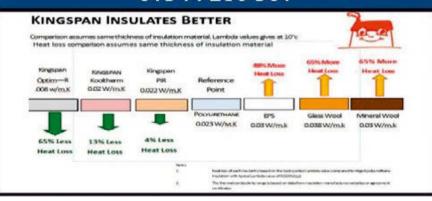
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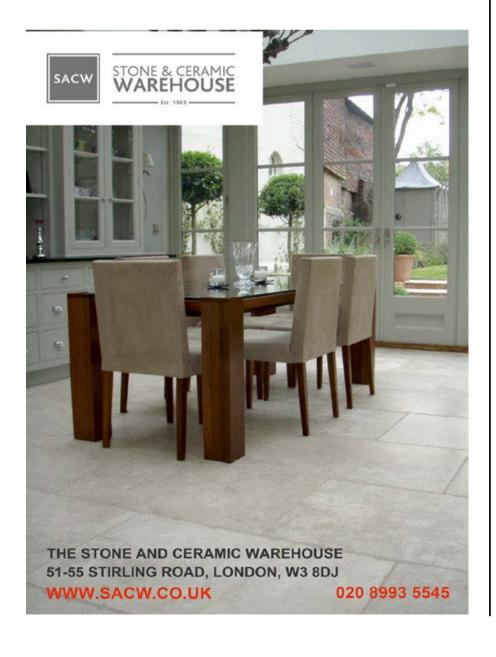
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THE WARMER HOME

The Best Ways to Insulate Roof Terraces

Balconies and roof terraces are popular ways to maximise existing floor usage and enjoy outdoor space. Adrian Pargeter explains the smart insulation solutions



ADRIAN PARGETER
Adrian is Head of Marketing
and Product Development
at Kingspan Insulation and
is one of the UK's leading
experts on insulation

oof terraces and balconies are clever ways of utilising existing footprints to create private spaces that interact well with outside. Whether taking advantage of an existing flat roof or building a new home or extension, the key is to find a design which gives you the right balance of aesthetics, accessibility and thermal performance.

As with any other building work, the specific thermal performance requirements for roof terraces vary depending on which home nation your property is located in and whether you are refurbishing, extending or building from scratch. In most cases though, a U value of 0.11W/m²K provides a good starting point for a compliant and well-insulated roof.

Where to Insulate — A Stumbling Block

So far, so good. However, while insulating a flat roof to this level is relatively straightforward (providing you use the right materials), roof terraces provide additional access considerations. These considerations make the process of insulating a balcony or terrace more challenging as, even with premium performance insulation, achieving a compliant U value requires a substantial insulation thickness to be fitted. The obvious way to make space for this thickness is to raise the floor level of the terrace or balcony above that of the floor level

of the internal rooms. This can result in a somewhat clumsy (and hazardous) step between the internal and external spaces.

The alternative route of insulating underneath the roof or balcony deck will often mean lowering the ceiling height in the room below. This loss of headroom can make rooms feel much more constricted, as well as creating unsightly

Roof terraces provide additional access considerations

discrepancies in room height. Insulating below the deck also does not adequately solve the issue as, unless a thicker layer of insulation is also applied above, it can lead to problems of interstitial condensation (which happens when a material is warm on one side and cold on the other, causing moisture to be deposited in liquid form within the material).

Vacuum Insulation Panels

One solution which has become increasingly popular on the Continent, particularly in Germany, Switzerland and Scandinavia, is to install an insulation system incorporating vacuum insulation panels (VIPs). VIPs are particularly well suited for applications where construction depth or space is critical. The minimal thickness of the insulation allows consistency of ceiling height and avoids the necessity of a step between the terrace and the adjacent room.

With an aged (in service) thermal conductivity as low as 0.007W/m²K, VIPs can offer optimum thermal performance, at a fraction of the thickness required for other commonly available insulation materials. This can ensure that balcony or terrace build-up thicknesses remain manageable from both a design and an accessibility point of view.

VIPs systems typically consist of vacuum panels with high-performance insulation infill strips of a matching thickness. These infill strips are usually fitted on the outer edge of the balcony or terrace as they can be cut to fit any irregular spaces or penetrations. VIPs manufacturers can supply a layout beforehand, demonstrating where all of the VIPs panels and infill strips should be placed — therefore maximising the ratio of VIPs to infill strips and keeping the required system thickness to a minimum.

To limit thermal bridging, a 25mm thickness of high-performance insulation should be fitted on the inner face of parapets and rooflight kerbs. A further thin layer of insulation can

then be overlaid on the system to receive the waterproof membrane. As with any flat roof, it is important to maintain adequate drainage and by fitting a tapered layer of insulation above the VIPs system, this requirement can easily be met. •

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PROJECTS

Why Do Estimates Go So Wrong?

The estimate establishes the viability of the building project — so making sure it is accurate is essential. Bob Branscombe analyses why it so often isn't



BOB BRANSCOMBE

Bob is a managing building surveyor with almost 30 years' experience running a mix of residential and commercial projects. He has particular expertise in cost estimation and project scheduling

n most cases, cost control takes the form of firefighting to contain costs within the original allowances.

But if the cost estimate is poor in the first place, no amount of value engineering (the concept of putting cost efficiency at the forefront of every decision with a view to reducing ongoing costs) will bring your project home to a standard and cost that you are happy with, and the taint it leaves the scheme is palpable.

Estimates are crucial to project success — it is the stage at which you try to establish that your project can be built to the budget you wish to spend, covering all the works you want to carry out. It establishes viability and, therefore, needs to be factual and totally accurate.

So why, when the actual process of estimating is relatively simple, do these estimates often go so wrong? The actual elements of work are often catered for correctly, the overall project is well understood by you, but why does the estimate often turn out to be inaccurate?

False Benchmarking

Benchmarking is an 'early doors' means of guessing how much a project will cost. Note my deliberate use of the word 'guessing'. In essence, you take a previous project, measure it in m², and multiply this cost by your new dimensions (a little more to it

than that but that is the bones of it). Then you apply this rate to your own project. The trouble is you are comparing your scheme to one which was built at a different time, in a different place, by different people, using different materials. Build costs can vary between £300-£3,000/m² due to the differences alluded to above — are you really comparing like with like?

Bespoke (or even niche) design has a price attached

THE QUICK READ

- ⇒ Estimates demand as much detail and as minimum assumption as possible — which means your drawings should cover everything and your specification be complete
- ⇒ As building materials and labour rates change quite rapidly, ensure that your estimate is relevant and recent – otherwise you could find it inaccurate
- The concentrate on process and programme as much as the 'headline' labour and materials pricing. Prelims and logistics can be the hidden costs that send an estimate awry

Assumptions

If you don't know something, making an assumption is your best guess of the right solution. This applies to specification, methods of working, access requirements, logistical support, delivery timeslots, lead-in times — the list goes on. If you assume something, bear in mind you are essentially guessing with a hint of education attached — that's all. And the accuracy of that guess is often open to the other parties' own assumptions or guesses. One man's assumption is another man's opportunity to make money. Guess at your peril!

Unclear or Incomplete Design

If something is unclear, different people will interpret it in different ways. If your design is open to interpretation, or has large elements yet to be cleared up, using provisional sums is useful but still leads to potential inaccuracy. The aim with any provisional is to allow enough money to cover the issue, but in more cases than I care to recall this works out usually being slightly

on the lower end of expectations to make the initial estimates more optimistic. Detail is the only sure way to establish prices.

Innovative Construction Techniques or Design Details

A major benefit of self-build and renovation is the ability to engage with 'off-piste' techniques, innovative design and cutting-



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PROJECTS ESTIMATES

The amount of wastage can run from 10 per cent to in the region of 40 per cent for intricate patterns... The design informs the working method, which informs the wastage allowance

edge technology and materials. However, do not ever associate these with traditional costing and lower build prices. Bespoke (or even niche) design has a price attached. It affects materials prices but, perhaps more so, contractors will struggle to accurately price for things that look out of the ordinary. The ability to get the lowest price is closely associated with using tried and tested methods, materials and systems — the economy of scale associated with the best prices from merchants, contractors and suppliers is well served here.

Estimate Lag and Prices

When was the plasterboard pricing last checked? How relevant is your estimate in the light of market changes? Construction materials prices have had a volatile few years. Some materials, in particular plasterboard, timber and concrete, have experienced significant annual price inflation — in some cases between 5-10 per cent. Labour rates can also change quite quickly. That's bad news for estimates that aren't very recently completed. A homeowner going back to a builder to confirm a go-ahead on an estimate supplied six months ago might find that their figures are no longer relevant which will affect the whole planning process.

Specification Change

Changing your mind is the main concern here — change costs money. It affects the estimate because it starts the 'add and omit' process. Change is where contractors do very well out of contracts. Change is often necessary, and the beauty of being in charge is the ability to satisfy your desires and requests — just be warned that change costs, and your cost control and forecasting abilities will be stretched, and your estimate will start to slip.

Procurement

In basic terms, the more accurate your design and the more risk and control you put onto the contractor, the more you can be confident that your precontract estimate of costs will be accurate. At the opposite end of the procurement spectrum, engaging trades on a weekly rate and buying your own materials gives you great hands-on control, but threatens your estimate as it is harder to control or predict timings (and therefore wage bills) and your own procurement of materials is of paramount importance.

Measure All the Work, Not Just the Headlines

When estimating costs, measurement of the work from the drawings and specification is vital. The main point here is that appreciating the full scope of the work is key. If we consider brickwork, for example, measuring the elevations will give you a good guess as to the overall job, but check that you have included the 'extra overs' — raking cuts at gables, forming cavities, weep holes, pointing after scaffold removal, band courses, building in lintels, etc. should all be accounted for. In other words, measure all the work, not just the headlines. And make sure you impart

this to the supply chain, rather than just getting a quote from the bricklayer for construction of 'X'm² of face brickwork.

Time and the Programme

The programme affects the estimate. Winter working, drying times, working hours externally with natural daylight — the time of year when the work is carried out will affect costs. Increases in time as the work progresses through delays, changes or procurement issues will all impact on the estimate profoundly as prelims and site management will increase, follow-on trades may be disrupted, and you may need to find different contractors (at different prices!) to keep to programme — the forgotten enemy of the estimate is the programme and its impact on cost.

Wastage

Understanding the impact of wastage allowances is vital in estimating — not just making sure you have allowed enough material and time to carry out the measured works, but have also included accurate and realistic wastage considerations. Take flooring, for example. A tiled floor laid with straight, square bonding (joints) is relatively efficient. At the edges, you will probably get two cuts out of one plain single colour floor tile — i.e cutting the tile to fit in at the edge is probably going to leave enough on that tile to use reversed on another edge. However, introduce a chequer board pattern and the number of reusable cut tiles diminishes. Add angles or changes in the bond and this diminishes even more. The amount of wastage can run from 10 per cent to in the region of 40 per cent for intricate patterns, to much higher numbers where different colours, patterns and bond are employed.

The design informs the working method which informs the wastage allowance. Make sure when estimating that this is thought about. Even planning ceiling heights can impact on this — 2.4m celling heights enable full-height plasterboard to be used with little wastage. While 2.5m requires small sections of board to be cut to complete the wall and 2.3m-high plasterboard will require 100mm of board to be thrown away with little chance of use elsewhere. When estimating, these considerations have an impact.

Logistics and Prelims

The unsung supporting cast of the building programme, these are the items which make the site run smoothly, safely and correctly. Access equipment, delivery procedures, site toilets, debris removal, management costs, printing of documentation, site insurances — all these need paying for but are easily overlooked when estimating costs as they are not directly associated with or measurable from the drawings. As a case in point, a typical build requires a 6m³ skip per week on site for general debris, as well as the skips for specific identified tasks. This could add circa £275 a week to the cost of the build without anything tangible being constructed. But failing to get rid of the rubbish as it accrues is fatal in terms of efficiency.



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BUILD COSTS

How Much Will My Cladding Cost?

Brickwork, timber cladding, render or tiles — how do the costs compare? David Snell finds some surprising answers

he choice of external cladding for your new home is going to be one of the single biggest influences on what it looks like. Brick is by far the most common option, with render, timber boarding and tile hanging as the other alternatives. Stone is usually required in the stone-belt areas such as the Cotswolds, and is usually considered the most expensive option. But what are the real differences in costs? (NB: the costs refer to facing square metre costs, rather than footprint.)



DAVID SNELL
David is the author of Building Your
Own Home, a 13-time self-builder and
has been building homes for 50 years

it as a remedial measure to the point it has become the norm. The advantage of dashing or Tyrolean, where the stone/mortar mixture is applied by a machine, is that it does not require decoration.

It is the decoration of a smooth rendered wall which adds to its cost and produces delays by the addition of an extra trade — as well as the resultant additional cost of the scaffolding having to stay up longer. There are 10 blocks per square metre.

Bricks: £56/m²

There are huge differences in the costs of bricks, with a medium-stock brick starting at around £350 per 1,000 bricks, running up to handmade bricks at circa £800/1,000. An average cost for a good brick would be around £450/1,000.

The labour costs for bricks normally includes the mixing of the mortar, although not the supply of the necessary materials for that mortar. Labour costs do not normally vary with the choice of brick and therefore, any increase in cost occasioned by the choice of a more expensive brick is confined to the material cost. There are typically 60 bricks to the square metre.

Average cost per m ²	£56.50
Labour @ £450/1,000	£27.00
Mortar per m ²	£2.50
Bricks @ £450/1,000	£27.00

Rendered Blockwork: £59/m²

The cost of bricks may persuade some to switch to rendered blockwork. But in most cases it will be a false economy as the additional cost of a blockwork outer skin is significant. In exposed parts of the UK, a rendered finish is more common, simply because it is easier to make the wall weatherproof, either due to the natural properties of the render or by the addition of a waterproofing agent.

Pebble or stone dashing is common in many areas, either to assist in weatherproofing or by virtue of the fact that, over time, older properties with defective brickwork have employed

Blocks (aircrete 450x215x100	mm)
	£8.30
Mortar	£1.00
Labour @ £12.50/m ²	£12.50
Labour and materials for two coats render	£25.00
Decoration — labour and materials	£12.50
Average cost per m ²	£59.30

Tile Hanging: £66-£80/m²

Tiles will typically be hung on an external blockwork skin which means that it shares much of the costs of a blockwork and rendered wall, amounting, as in the example above, to around £21.80/m².

The choice of a concrete plain hanging tile is going to add around £45, bringing the total up to £66.80 but, if a handmade clay tile was chosen then this could add £80/ m^2 , bringing the total up to £101.80 — close on double the cost of a decent brickwork finish.

Timber Cladding: £50/m²

Softwood featheredge boarding (labour and materials) is going to add £15.74/ m^2 to the cost of the blockwork. But it then has to be decorated, which will add another £12, bringing the total cost to £49.54/ m^2 .

Siberian larch and western red cedar are en vogue at present. They don't need decoration and will naturally silver. At a labour and materials cost of around £27.89 (the labour is higher because of the need for 'secret nailing') this, added to the blockwork costs comes to £49.69/m². Modified timbers such as Accoya are likely to add at least another £30-£40/m².

The Build Cost Calculator

A simple cost-estimating guide for people building their own home

BUILD ROUTE A

ne of the most important aspects when planning your self-build or home renovation/extension project is working out how much it is going to cost.

This figure will depend on the size and shape of the house, the level of your own involvement, where in the country you intend to build, and the materials you're going to use. If you can make even rough decisions about these factors, then you can begin to work out how much it is going to cost.

As a very general rule of thumb, expect a building plot to cost between a third and a half of the end value of the finished house. The costs of building a house will then depend on the variables listed above. All building work is usually quoted on a cost/m² basis. For example, a typical new four bedroom self-built home is around 200m² (with 100m² on two storeys) and usually varies between £900-£1,500/m² (although self-builders achieve costs between £300-£3,000/m²).

Renovation costs are more difficult to establish as they involve many variables, but allow at least £1,000-£1,300/m² for work. This, added to the cost of the plot/house and with a 10-30 per cent contingency, should result in less than the final end value of the house.

The table below, based on information from the Build Cost

BUILD ROUTE C

Information Service (part of RICS), is updated monthly to help you work out a more accurate estimate (note, however, that these figures are for build costs only and do not account for VAT, which is not charged for self-build projects). There is an interactive online version at www.homebuilding.co.uk/calculator which guides you through the process.

BUILD ROUTE D

HOW TO USE THE TABLE

1. Identify your build route from the four options; 2. Identify your expected level of specification: 'standard', 'good' or 'excellent'; 3. Identify the estimated size of your finished house (either single or two/ more storeys); 4. Choose your location; **5.** Multiply the figure by your house size

BUILD ROUTE B

		(DIY + Subbies)		(Subbies)			(Builder/Subbies)			(Main Contractor)			
SINGLES	STOREY	Standard	d Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent
>90m²	Greater London	1192	1379	1659	1262	1460	1756	1332	1542	1854	1403	1623	1951
	South-East	1045	1210	1455	1107	1281	1541	1168	1352	1626	1230	1423	1712
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	951	1101	1324	1007	1166	1401	1063	1231	1479	1118	1295	1557
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	909	1053	1266	963	1114	1340	1016	1176	1415	1070	1238	1489
91-160m²	Greater London	1092	1325	1721	1156	1403	1823	1220	1481	1924	1284	1559	2025
	South-East	958	1161	1509	1014	1230	1598	1070	1298	1687	1127	1366	1776
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	871	1057	1375	923	1119	1455	974	1182	1536	1025	1244	1617
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	833	1011	1314	883	1071	1391	932	1130	1469	981	1189	1546
161m²+	Greater London	972	1275	1599	1029	1350	1694	1086	1425	1788	1150	1500	1882
	South-East	852	1118	1403	903	1183	1485	953	1249	1568	1003	1315	1651
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	775	1017	1277	821	1077	1353	867	1137	1428	912	1196	1503
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	741	973	1221	785	1030	1292	828	1088	1364	872	1145	1436
TWO ST	OREY												
90-130m ²	Greater London	1147	1327	1630	1215	1405	1726	1282	1483	1822	1350	1561	1918
	South-East	1006	1164	1430	1066	1232	1514	1125	1301	1598	1184	1369	1683
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	915	1060	1302	969	1122	1379	1023	1184	1456	1077	1247	1532
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	875	1013	1244	926	1073	1317	978	1133	1391	1029	1192	1464
131-220m²	Greater London	966	1170	1483	1023	1239	1571	1080	1307	1658	1137	1376	1745
	South-East	848	1026	1301	898	1087	1378	947	1147	1454	997	1208	1531
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	771	934	1184	816	989	1254	861	1044	1323	907	1099	1393
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	738	893	1132	781	945	1198	824	998	1265	868	1050	1332
221m²+	Greater London	891	1141	1433	944	1208	1517	996	1276	1601	1049	1343	1685
	South-East	783	1000	1257	829	1059	1331	875	1118	1405	921	1177	1479
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	712	910	1144	753	964	1211	795	1018	1278	837	1071	1345
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	681	870	1094	721	921	1158	761	973	1223	801	1024	1287

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Toolkit: Kitchen Extensions



This section: An in-depth design and building project guide. Edited by Claire Lloyd

128 Beginner's Guide to Kitchen Extensions

How to get started, the costs, the rules and regs, design ideas, the process explained, plus the different routes to achieving a kitchen extension — our must-read guide explains how to achieve this popular addition

135 Nine Steps to Kitchen Extension Success

Experts tips — from heating, to future proofing and lighting schemes

136 Case Study: Framed in Oak
An oak frame extension
provides a spacious kitchen for entertaining

140 Case Study: Copper Inspiration A striking contemporary extension, clad in copper, provides space for a light-filled kitchen

159 Source List A directory of useful kitchen extension contacts

KITCHEN EXTENSIONS



A New Kitchen Space

Sometimes extending out is the only way of achieving that dream kitchen diner — but there a few key ingredients which go into getting this space just right

t perhaps goes without saying that the kitchen has become the heart of many a home. No longer simply a place for just preparing meals, it's now a multifunctional space; it's typically used for dining (meaning the 'cook' is no longer isolated from guests or the rest of the family), as an informal living area, and may even incorporate desk space for the children's homework. And for those with existing homes without this enviable room, extending out to create space for a kitchen diner or living kitchen is one of the most favourable homebuilding projects to take on.

"This type of project is massively popular," says kitchen designer Jim Gettings, director of J&S House of Design. "We often find that homeowners are taking on a project of this nature in addition to restructuring the ground floor, for example knocking down walls between the existing kitchen and dining room."

Where to Start

Formulating your ideas and working out what you want from a new kitchen is the starting point for establishing whether you can utilise the existing space in the home, or whether an extension will be the only means of achieving the floor space required. A couple of key questions to ask yourself include: Do you hope to eat meals in this room and if so, will this simply be informal dining (i.e. with chairs collected around a breakfast bar) or will you need a dining table for entertaining and family meals, or perhaps both? Are there sizable key features you hope to accommodate, such as a range? Would you ideally like to include a living area, or perhaps dedicated office space? Do you want to connect to the outdoors in order to enjoy the garden views and/or have the potential for outdoor dining and in doing so, will the kitchen still have good access to the rest of the house too?









It's a good idea to begin thinking about the layout, too. Do you want an island, for example? Would you like the space to be entirely open plan, or would you ideally like to include partial walls or some sort of division between the kitchen and the living area, for instance? Or would you prefer a layout which enabled kitchen clutter and washing up to be concealed out of view when dining; an L-shaped layout often lends itself in this way. Do you need a separate utility for noise-generating appliances and for laundry? From such answers you'll begin to form a brief, which can in turn be passed to your designer.

"A badly executed kitchen extension could prove a costly investment so don't rush the process," advises Graeme Smith, senior designer at Second Nature and 1909 Kitchens. "Take time to gather pictures and ideas of other projects you like and be guided by your kitchen designer and architectural designer."

Thought should also be given to what this extension will look like externally: will your new addition seamlessly blend in with the existing house, or will it be strikingly different, defining itself as an 'evolution in time'? Bear in mind that some houses lend themselves more readily to 'matching' extensions, while others can be trickier. Brick homes, for instance, fall into the latter category; finding a brick to match the existing brick colour, texture and size – the brick originally used is more than likely to have long gone out of production or be on a long lead time – can be difficult. But it's not impossible and techniques such as brick tinting (if you can find a brick of the same texture and size) can work well.

If you hope to incorporate large areas of glazing, this is typi-

Extending Out

1: High-level glazing brings in light while maintaining privacy. The bespoke American black walnut and pale grey painted cabinetry is by Woodstock Furniture; 2: This kitchen extension (completed by ARKHI.build) to a barn conversion exposes the original exterior stone wall as a feature to stunning effect; 3: This kitchen extension beneath a catslide roof, designed by TG Studio, is so seamless, it's hard to believe it's an extension at all; 4: This striking London side return extension was designed by architect Cathie Curran; 5: Introducing light from above is one way to achieve a light-filled space in a traditional setting. The deVOL Real Shaker Kitchen shown

cally best done with a contemporary addition. But this does not mean more traditional extensions will be dark and lacking in natural light. Roof lanterns, for example, can be an excellent way of bringing light in from above while being arguably more sympathetic to period and traditional homes.

Routes to Achieving a Kitchen Extension

This leads on to the different routes to achieving a kitchen extension. One popular option is a design and build company who will provide a package solution, taking you from design concept through to completion. This is a good solution where you hope to be fairly hands off and want the reassurance of working with one company throughout. The popularity of kitchen extensions in the Capital in particular has seen a rising number of such companies

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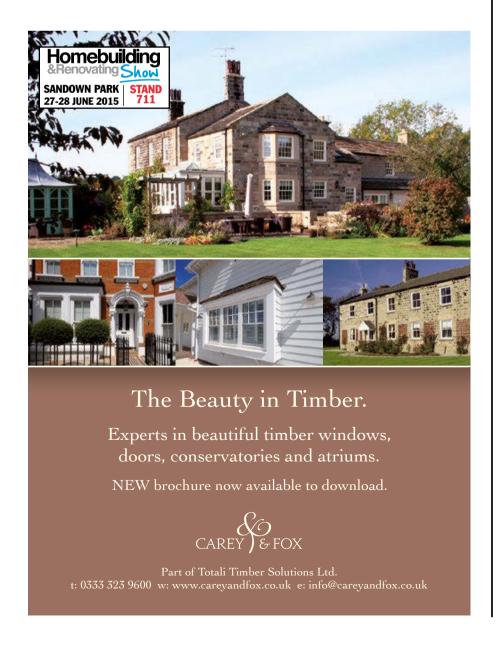
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Another route is hiring an architect (visit <u>architecture.com</u>), architectural technologist (<u>ciat.org.uk</u>) or architectural designer to develop a design concept and plans, which will in turn be put out to tender to a building contractor. Employing a talented architectural designer or architect is often the best route to achieving something a little more creative than a box-like addition. "They can inspire you with design solutions that you may not have considered," adds Hugo Tugman, founder of Architect Your Home. This route may also give you the freedom to project manage and hire subcontractors directly if you so wish.

Things to bear in mind here include the fact that some architectural designers only provide conceptual drawings, while others offer a service which includes both the latter and plans for Building Regulations purposes. You may want to retain your architectural designer or architect to oversee the work too, but this will inevitably attract an additional cost. "If the architectural designer is retained to help put the project out to tender and appoint the builder under a formal contract, as well as to provide contract administration services, the fee will typically be a further three to seven per cent of the total contract value," explains Michael Holmes, serial renovator and *Homebuilding & Renovating's* Content Director. "For a more ad-hoc site attendance, service troubleshooting or adding design detail during the build, it is reasonable to agree a daily or hourly rate."

There are also an emerging few companies who are now offering something a little different — an architect-led design and build service, such as ARKHI.build (see p.140 for one such project by the practice) and ArchitecturAll. Perhaps the best of both worlds.

One further option is approaching an oak frame company; some provide a design service as well as erecting the oak frame and potentially completing other elements of the build. Again, this route could provide the opportunity to project manage the groundworks and the finishing work yourself.

Another professional who you may want to get on board is a kitchen designer. Interestingly, some architectural practices are also stepping into this role; the benefit here being that the extension will be tailored exactingly to your kitchen.

The Secrets to Kitchen Extension Success

Whichever aforementioned route you opt for, the key is finding a designer and/or build company with experience in this type of project. "The input of an experienced architectural designer is fundamental to ensure the kitchen is in the right location with good access from the central hallway, and on to the garden/patio," says Michael Holmes. "They will help you make the most of natural light, plan the zones for cooking, dining and living, plus decide where to position utility space and appropriate lighting."

It's also vital to plan the kitchen at an early stage. "The mistake that homeowners most often make is that they don't approach a kitchen design company or design the kitchen early enough in the project. Some approach us when the walls are up and floor is down, which really is too late in the process," says Jim Gettings. "One particular issue is extraction. Some homeowners opt for pitched ceilings or for large rooflights, but then leave it too late to include provision for extraction above an island, for example.





Making the Most of the Garden

Extending out provides opportunity to position glazing so as to frame views of the garden (as in this Harvey Jones bespoke kitchen, top), while bi-fold or sliding doors can be an excellent means of opening up the house for alfresco dining (above)

This then means that downdraught extraction may have to be included instead, but because the floor slab is already down, it has to be dug up. If a kitchen company is involved in the early stages – ideally before the design is finalised – then provisions can be made and the services can be put in place, thus avoiding costly alterations.

"Window heights and door positions are another area which needs careful planning," adds Jim Gettings. "Again, involvement at an early stage can make the difference between making small tweaks – which can even be pushing a window 300mm along – and getting the kitchen you want, or compromising in this area."

Designer Graeme Smith agrees: "It's really never too early to start thinking about the kitchen layout as you can tailor the size of the extension to accommodate any specific features you desire. It also means that you can get services put in. Your kitchen specialist will have lots of ideas which you may not have thought of and you can benefit from these from the start."



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KITCHEN EXTENSIONS A BEGINNER'S GUIDE



L-Shaped Layout

L-shaped layouts work well in rooms where you hope to tuck away the kitchen from view of the dining space, but still be in ears' reach of the action. This kitchen, Second Nature's new Porter Dove Grey range, offers a contemporary yet timeless aesthetic that ties in effortlessly with living areas in open plan schemes. It's priced from £8,000

The Planning Rules and Building Regulations

A kitchen extension may fall under Permitted Development, meaning you don't need to apply for planning permission. In fact, there's a great deal that can be done under Permitted Development (PD), providing certain criteria are met. (Although bear in mind that homes within designated areas, such as Conservation Areas, and listed properties will likely be subject to restricted PD rights.)

Until May 2016, single storey rear extensions which do not extend beyond the rear of the 'original' house by more than 6m for an attached house, or by 8m for a detached house, can fall within PD, for instance (although a list of other criteria, including height, apply too). This allowance was doubled in May 2013 for three years (from 3m to 6m, and 4m to 8m), but it does require an additional process – including neighbour consultation – not dissimilar to having to apply for planning permission. A list of criteria can be found on the planningportal.gov.uk.

Some planning authorities publish supplementary guidance that identifies the rules by which a planning application will be considered. In general, extensions are required to look subservient to the existing house, and this may be defined more precisely by a maximum volume for any enlargements. For example, in one area, the policy might be that the total volume of extensions should be no more than 40 per cent of the original dwelling. Other local authorities may have much tighter limits or no further supplementary guidance at all.

If in doubt, contact your local planning department. If you hope to resell the house in the near future or simply want peace of mind you may, however, want to consider obtaining a Lawful Development Certificate from the local planning authority; it will cost £86 (in England) and should take eight weeks to process.

Any extension that is not classed under PD will require planning permission. Applications are made by submitting details and

drawings of the project, together with the appropriate form and planning fee. It's likely that you will need to submit extra information if you live near a flood zone or an area of ecological interest. A decision is usually made within eight weeks. For a householder planning application, the fee is currently £172 in England, £202 in Scotland, £166 in Wales and £285 in Northern Ireland.

Regardless of whether planning is needed, Building Regulations approval is a requirement when extending. As such, a building inspector will want to come out at various stages of the build. Your builder or project manager may sort this out for you, otherwise you will be responsible for contacting your local authority, or you might choose to use a private Approved Inspector.

The local authority building control department or Approved Inspector will need 48 hours' notification of the start of work. Fees for Building Regulations approval will depend on the size of extension. "They are likely to range from £250 for a project of 1-10m² and £900 for 80-100m²," says Michael Holmes.

For some tasks during the project, such as the electrics and plumbing, the qualified tradesperson will 'self certify' for Building Regs purposes under the Competent Person Scheme.

The Process

"Work will begin with any demolition and site clearance, followed by the groundworks and the oversite slab (concrete base)," explains Michael Holmes. "The structure will then be built to weathertight stage (roofed in, with doors and windows), usually followed by knocking through to link the extension to the existing house, although a temporary partition may be added at this stage so that the house can remain habitable.

"The next stage is first fix, and involves fitting door and window linings, and all the plumbing, wiring and ducts that will be hidden by the plastering, which follows. Once the plaster is dry, it is time for second fix, which includes laying flooring, hanging internal doors, fitting architrave and skirting, installing light fittings and the kitchen. The final stage is decorating and tiling."

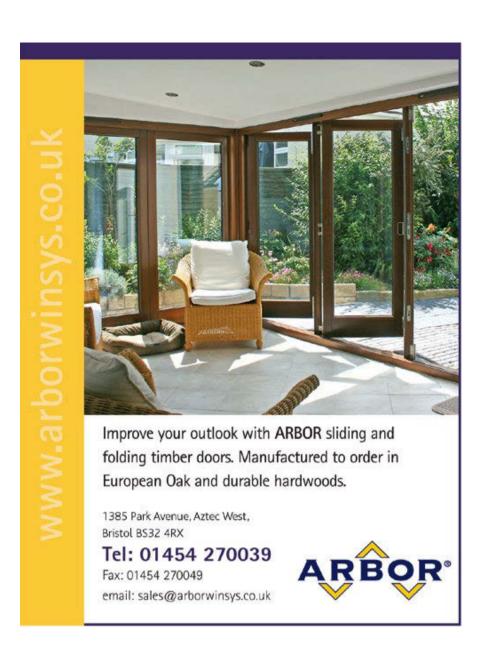
What Will an Extension Cost?

Prices will vary depending on the work carried out, but as a general guide (excluding VAT and kitchen), a basic extension costs £1,050-£1,450/m², while a more individual extension will cost £1,450-£1,850/m² and upwards.

However, work to an existing home can throw up unforeseen problems, so a contingency fund is key. "A contingency fund should always be planned for as invariably building projects can go awry and you don't know what you may discover when you start work," advises Graeme Smith of Second Nature and 1909 Kitchens. "Difficult ground conditions, such as clay, peat, nearby trees or slopes, will increase foundation costs," adds Michael Holmes.

"Budgeting can be a major issue and if sufficient funds are not allocated it can lead to shortcuts or compromises on the quality of materials used," says Graeme Smith. "In fact, it can help to have two separate budgets, one for the building work and one for the kitchen, with their own contingencies, so you don't take away from the kitchen budget if the build goes over.

"Ultimately you are also adding value to your property or increasing its saleability, and while this may not be your main driver it's always good to have an eye out for investment value."









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KITCHEN EXTENSIONS

Nine Steps to Kitchen Extension Success

Expert tips on making sure you avoid the common mistakes

Lional space, but one potential issue which needs addressing is natural light; extending out inevitably adds depth to existing rooms. "Think about how the new extension will affect the light in the existing adjoining room(s), and if the addition of roof windows or sun pipes will help to make both spaces brighter," advises Homebuilding & Renovating's Content Director Michael Holmes.

Making the most of natural light in the new extension is also key. "Introduce daylight from as many directions as possible, including rooflights and high-level or obscure-glazed windows where privacy may be an issue. Prioritise the best-quality space – with the best daylight and nicest views – to the functions that are most important to you, usually living and dining."

2 "Ensure that you future proof your kitchen for changes in your circumstances," advises Second Nature and 1909 Kitchens senior designer Graeme Smith. "For example, if you are planning a family, then think about curved cabinetry and softening the lines to reduce sharp edges."

Heating the added space will also need some thought. "If you have a relatively new and energy-efficient boiler, check whether it is powerful enough to handle the additional heating demand," advises Michael. "If your boiler is more than 10 years old, consider replacing it, as a more energy-efficient design will help offset the cost." A straightforward gas boiler replacement will cost around £2,300, according to the Energy Saving Trust.

Building a new extension can provide opportunity to introduce wet underfloor heating (UFH) too; a particularly good idea if it's a room you intend to spend most of your day in. "But do bear in mind that you can't have UFH beneath kitchen cabinets though," says Jim Gettings of J&S House of Design.

On this note, check too as to whether your existing electrics can cope with the additional load. If your home was built before the 1970s and features the original wiring, this will more than likely be overdue for complete renewal. "If your consumer unit (distribution board) is an older type with rewireable fuses, it will need to be replaced," says surveyor Ian Rock and author of the Haynes *Home Extension Manual*. "Modern 'split load' consumer units have miniature circuit breakers for each individual circuit, and additional residual current device (RCD) protection.

"Kitchens need their own dedicated circuit, so a kitchen exten-

sion could be served by a new supply run direct from the consumer unit; most modern units should have sufficient spare capacity. Alternatively, you could extend the cable supplying the (soon to be redundant) existing kitchen," advises Ian Rock. "Electric cookers also require separate fused circuits."

5While 'zoning' is a great means of visually separating out areas where different functions will be undertaken (cooking, dining, etc.) in this open plan space, a consistent interior scheme is key to creating a sense of flow and tying the space together. Keep the flooring consistent, and be mindful of the colour scheme, textures and materials used throughout this space.

6 If you live in an attached (semi or terraced) home or the house sits in close proximity to a neighbouring property, you'll likely need a Party Wall Award under the Party Wall Act. For more information, visit homebuilding.co.uk.

A well-designed lighting scheme is key to the success of this room. There are different types of artificial lighting: general or ambient lighting, task lighting and accent lighting. A good lighting scheme will consist of considered 'layers' of all three. Think too about the colour of the light: cooler whites are ideal for tasks such as food prep, while warm lighting sets the mood for evening dining. You may have to introduce more than one circuit to accommodate different options.

Think too about all the activities which may take place in this room. For example, while pendant lights look stunning above a dining table or island, if this spot doubles as a place for homework, you may want to consider an additional source of light, or ensure the pendants are dimmable.

8 If you're living in the house during the build, ensure existing doorways or openings between the house and new extension are adequately sealed. Also ensure that the new kitchen is on site, ready to install, before the old one is ripped out — this will help to minimise the time that you'll do without a kitchen (and time spent cooking on a camp stove and washing up in the bath).

 $\mathbf{9}$ "If you're thinking about a single storey extension now, but adding a second storey later, ensure the foundations and walls are strong enough to support extensive future works," concludes Michael Holmes. $\mathbf{0}$



KITCHEN EXTENSIONS CASE STUDY



Framed in Oak

An oak frame extension provides scope for an impressive space for entertaining



PAUL EDMUNDS Paul Edmunds is the director of Welsh Oak Frame, one of the leading oak frame companies in the UK (welshoakframe.com)

HB&R: At what point were Welsh Oak Frame approached with regards to adding a new kitchen extension here?

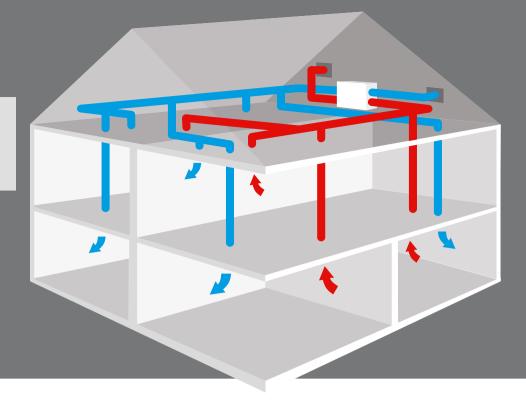
Paul: The architect of a relatively local practice initially approached us with plans for a single storey extension to this farmhouse in Flintshire. Oak framing works on the principle of bay structures, so we applied our knowledge to transform the plans in order that they worked for an oak frame construction. Once we'd worked through this process, we presented the homeowners with a 3D model of the room to give them an insight into what could be achieved for their budget.

At what stage should a homeowner ideally approach an oak frame company if they're hoping to build an extension?

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KITCHEN EXTENSIONS CASE STUDY



Bringing in Natural Light

The glazed oak frame gable end is a wow-factor feature to this new single storey, stone-clad kitchen extension



to understand how oak framing works both structurally and aesthetically in order to design an oak frame addition.

If the design is already completed then it can be difficult to 'shoehorn' in an oak frame into a new build which has not been designed around oak framing principles. We also provide a design service here, which is one way of overcoming this.

The trusses are a wow-factor feature in this extension — do you have any design tips when it comes to the frame?

The good thing about single storey extensions is that you can have vaulted ceilings and express the oak frame internally with some ease. Oak frame can be used too in conjunction with large areas of glazing; the gable end in this extension is almost fully glazed. We used a kingpost truss with two struts; it's fairly traditional. The size of the room (the span) can often dictate the type of framing used; the larger the span, the larger the oak members required to support the roof load.

However, you have to be careful not to 'over-egg' the oak frame. It's an area which can be easy to get wrong; the oak can look too chunky if oversized. Oak frame is all about scale and proportion. This is why getting an oak frame specialist on board is important; they have the experience to know what looks right.

The other thing about oak frame is that you can achieve quite different results. There are a surprising number of ways of engineering an A-frame; you can use a queenpost, raised collar, etc. to create the style of truss. The struts can be straight or curved too. You can also marry the tradition of oak framing (the mortise and tenons joints) to create something more contemporary. More homeowners are looking to us for ideas of what they can achieve.

How involved were Welsh Oak Frame during the build?

We provided a basic package here. A builder was employed to prepare the foundations and, once this was done, we erected the oak frame, completing all the glazing and the joinery work. This took around four days; it's a relatively quick process on site. The builder then finished the remaining work, including the roofing, plastering, wiring, heating and decoration. However, homeowners can also choose to take on a more hands-on role, hiring subcontractors directly to finish the build.

Were there any particular challenges on site?

Not during this build, but one thing homeowners extending need to bear in mind is access. Often adding a kitchen extension will involve work to the rear of the house, which can in turn mean limited or restricted access. We have crab cranes for lifting the oak above the house. Make sure you (or the company undertaking the work) have the right equipment on site to deal with this issue.

How do you connect the extension with the house?

It depends on the construction of the house; is it cavity wall, solid brick, does it have a thatch roof, etc.? Here, the wall was a rendered cavity wall, and you install a vertical damp-proof course where the oak frame abuts the existing house; which is similar to masonry.

What's been the feedback from the homeowners?

They love the new space and the proportions of the room; they're over the moon. Oak frame is all about the proportions.

KITCHEN EXTENSIONS CASE STUDY



Copper Inspiration

A striking extension to a 1930s semi in St Helens provides a 21st-century kitchen



MATTHEW LEWIS
Architect Matthew Lewis is
director of ARKHI.build, an
architect-led design and build
company (arkhibuild.com)

HB&R: Did the homeowners present ARKHI.build with a detailed brief for this kitchen extension project?

Matthew: The homeowners had been living with a galley-style kitchen for nearly 30 years and always hoped to change it; the room also happened to be quite dark. There was an existing flat-roofed extension but this was quite leaky, so they wanted to replace it too.

They originally planned to add a replacement extension to house a utility space and a downstairs WC, but this would have used up valuable space. Instead we suggested we put all the focus on the extension by utilising it as a new kitchen, with the former dark kitchen being divided up as a utility and WC instead.

Was a contemporary design always on the cards?

When you extend 1930s pebbledash and brick-clad houses with matching materials, the new addition doesn't tend to look right in my view; the materials will never quite match up. Instead, creating a clear divide between the 1930s house and a 21st-century extension was a better proposal. Indeed, the homeowners said that we took them out of their comfort zone.

Where did the idea for the copper cladding derive?

We've done quite a lot of work with metals in the past, and we also knew we'd need to introduce a low-pitch roof here due to the first floor window cills above; metal can be used on pitches as low as 7°. What's more, looking into the history of the area, St Helens has a history of copper smelting. So we presented the



Above: A Brand-New Kitchen

This striking copper-clad extension houses a new kitchen (with the former kitchen remodelled as a utility and WC). Considerable time was invested in getting the positions of the windows just right — the large fixed slot windows, for example, punctuate the space between kitchen cabinetry, framing views of the garden flower beds

homeowners with plans featuring three different finishes, including white render — they opted for the copper.

The side wall is clad in burnt larch. Once burnt, the timber retains its colour and is low maintenance.

What was the copper cladding like to work with?

We used a pre-weathered copper. It can be difficult in the sense that, before starting on site you're looking at small samples of copper, then you move on to a large area of copper during the build, so you have to manage homeowners' expectations.

There was also a concern that it was being scratched during installation. The manufacturer confirmed that scratches would weather away after being exposed to the elements for a couple of months — and they have. Copper has to be installed with a ventilation gap (if there's no gap, it sweats), which is something to bear in mind too.

Glazing is important here — how did the design develop?

The site dictated the design in many ways. Normally you'd expect to see bi-fold doors on the rear wall; instead, we've added them



>

KITCHEN EXTENSIONS CASE STUDY



on the side. This is because the project is unusual in that this extension is actually on the front of the property, although the house does face a private, no-through road. So the bi-fold doors were added on the north-facing side to create a more private courtyard. As we were keen to maximise light throughout the day, we added slot windows on the south-facing elevation — they frame the view of the flower borders which the homeowners had spent a long time creating, in addition to capturing solar gain.

To this aim, we've introduced structural glazing where the wall and roof meet too. We approached a glazing supplier who created this silicon-jointed glass solution for the project.

How was the project received by the local planners?

We had a very receptive planning officer, with whom we had a pre-application meeting before we submitted the plans. The officer's only concern was how the project was going to be delivered and whether the quality of materials and finish were going to be as good as those illustrated on the plans — this concern was addressed when we made assurances that ARKHI.build were also delivering the build.

What construction system was used?

We used SIPs (structural insulated panels) which are selfsupporting and provided a clear space inside. Given all the glazing, we did consider steel, but it would have been complex and we

Above: New Kitchen

Copper makes an appearance in the interiors of the new kitchen, with feature pendant lighting and the copper-effect Dekton TECH worktop. Bi-fold doors open this space to a courtyard

didn't want boxed-in steels on show. It was a quick and simple build using SIPs.

The only real challenge we had on site was hitting bedrock quite early on when digging the foundations. Once we got out of the ground, everything else ran smoothly.

ARKHI.build also designed the kitchen and this is as striking as the exterior — did a lot of planning go into this space?

We didn't want to overdo it, but there are subtle references throughout to the copper exterior. We introduced a Dekton TECH worktop, which gives the appearance of copper. There's also the copper-style feature pendant lights.

The worktop has been exactingly lined up to visually sit between the structural glazing either side. A lot of detailing also went into the kitchen cabinets, which sit between the slotted windows.

The new kitchen has been opened up to an existing room by means of a curved wall; this allows light into the rest of the house. The internal doors have also been replaced with glass doors to provide a clear view from the front of the house to the back. $\ensuremath{\Theta}$

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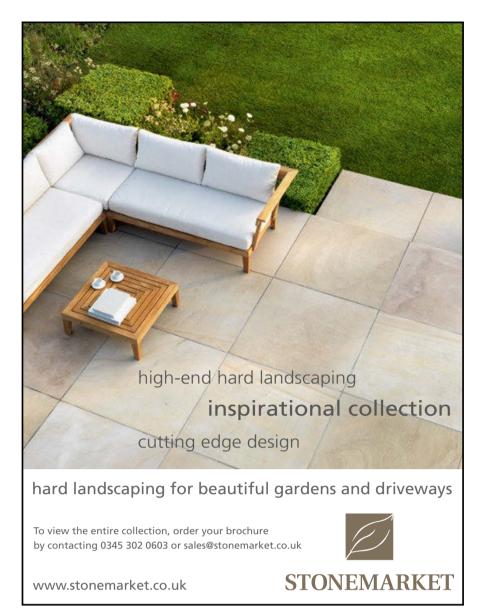
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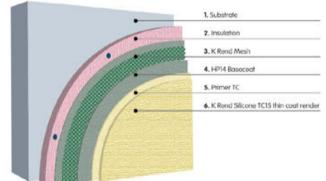
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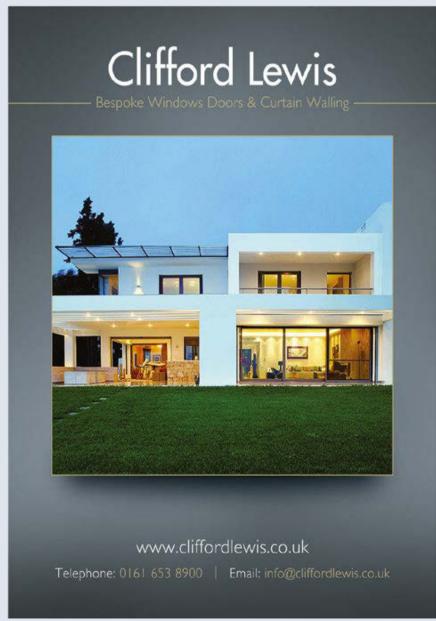
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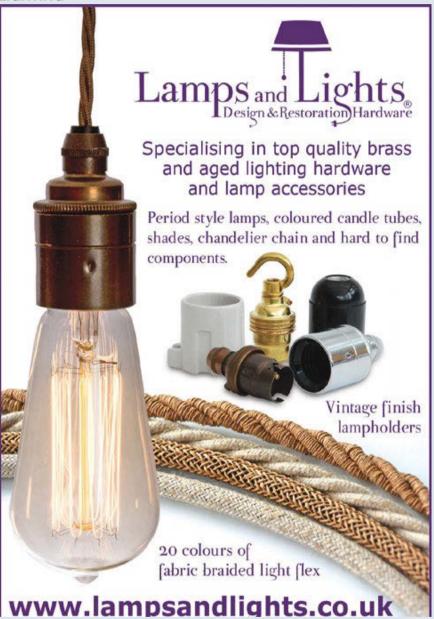
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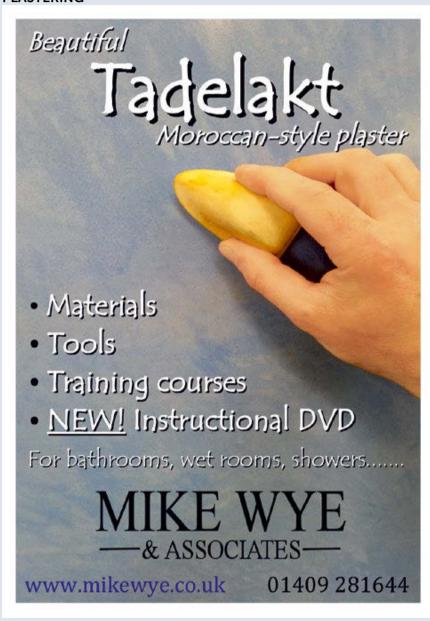
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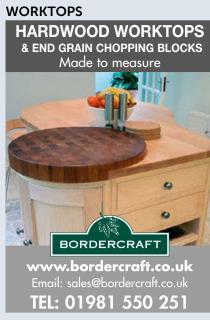
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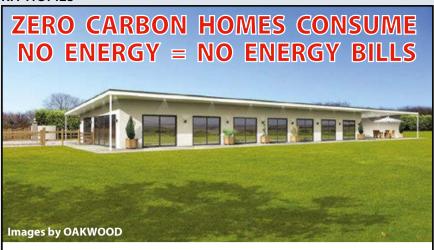


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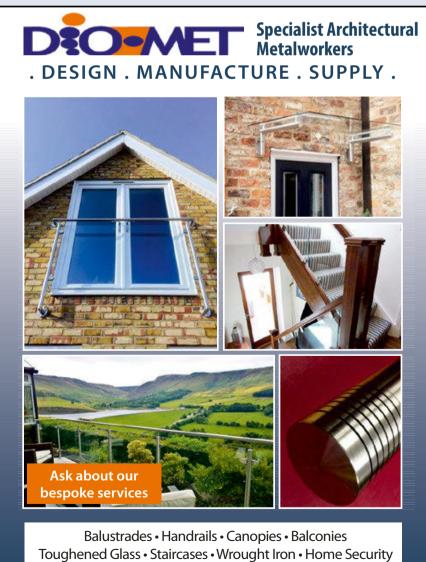
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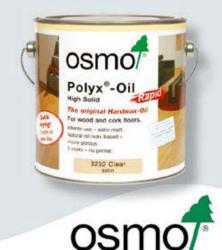
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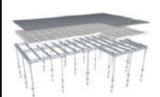
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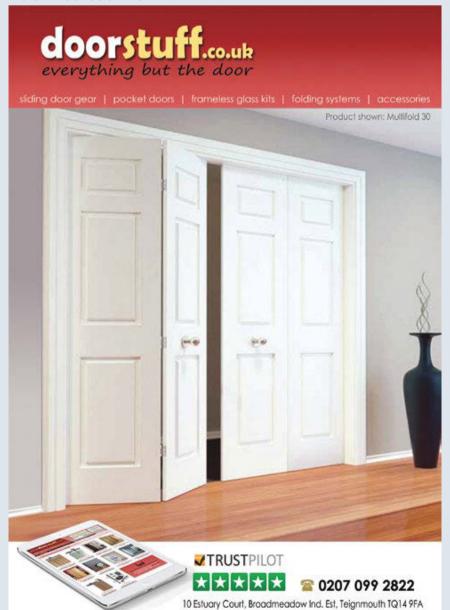






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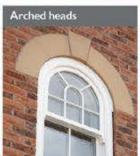
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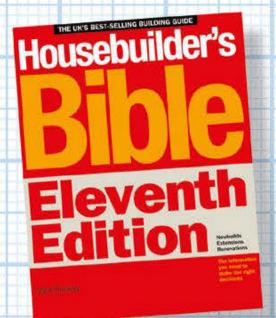
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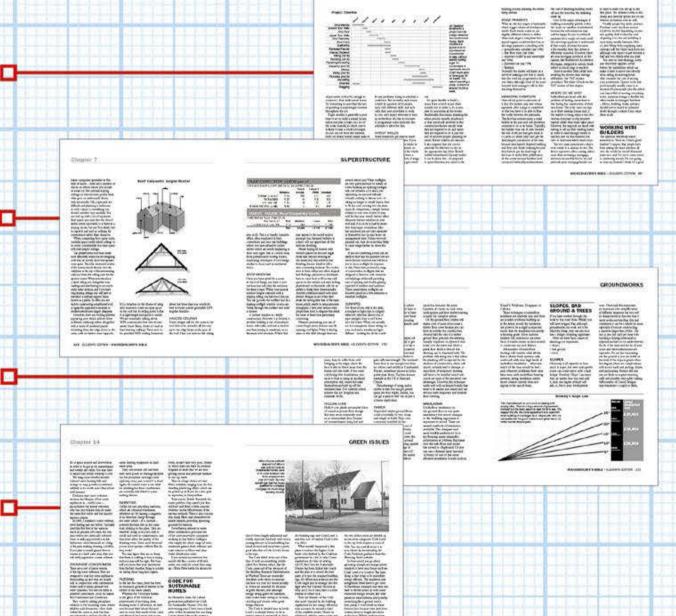
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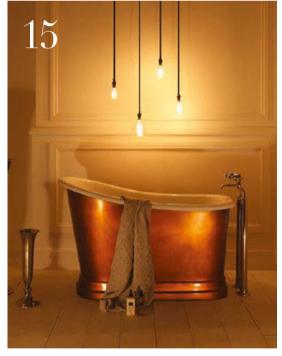
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Louvres

Architect Nicolas Tye shares one of his favourite design tricks

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and you want lots of glazing, then you need some form of solar shading. If you want to go down the more architectural route, then you could specify horizontal louvres, which also help with privacy and overlooking. They're a popular form of solar shading as they create less visual impact. Similarly, vertical louvres can be stacked if you want to change the outlook. Some are remote operated, so you can adjust the level of protection, which can also give a feeling of extra security.



Nicolas Tye is the director of award-winning practice Nicolas Tye Architects (nicolastyearchitects.com)

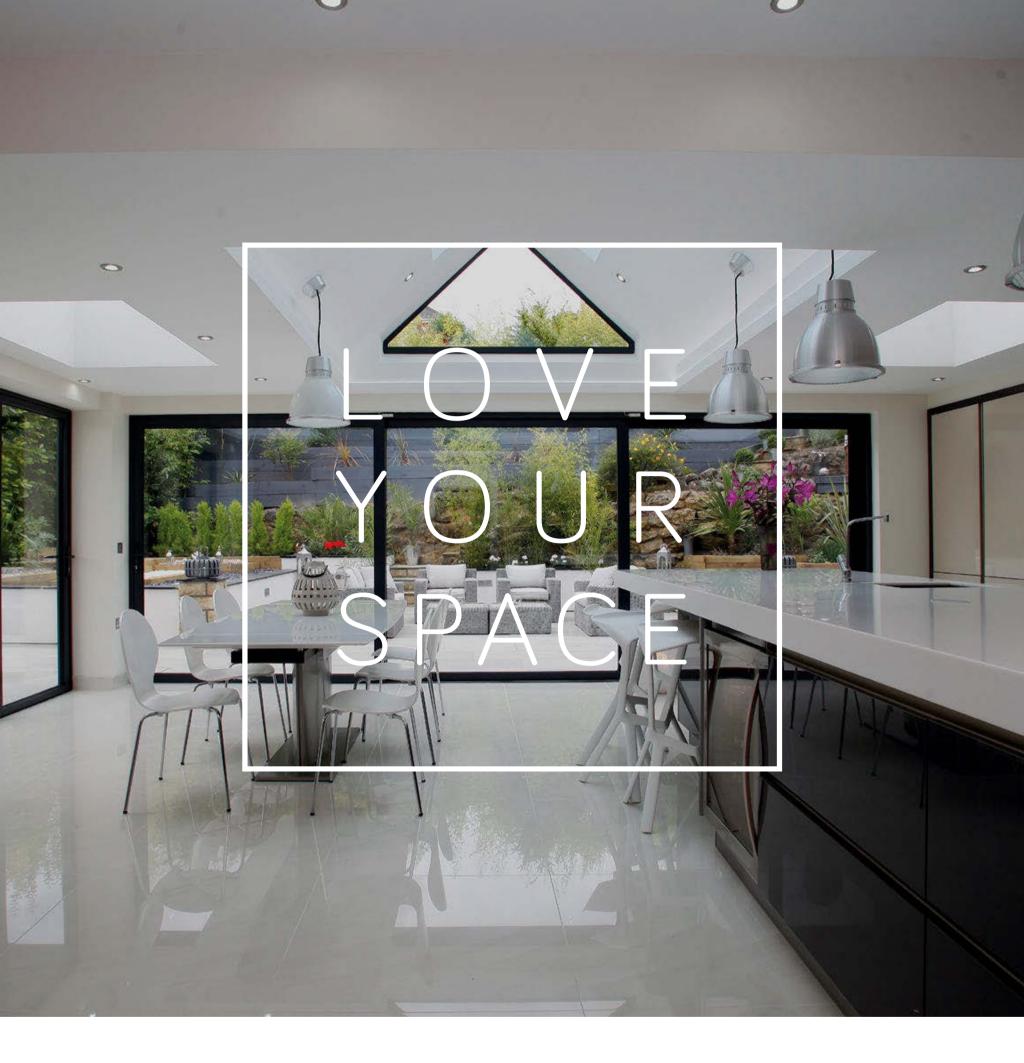
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